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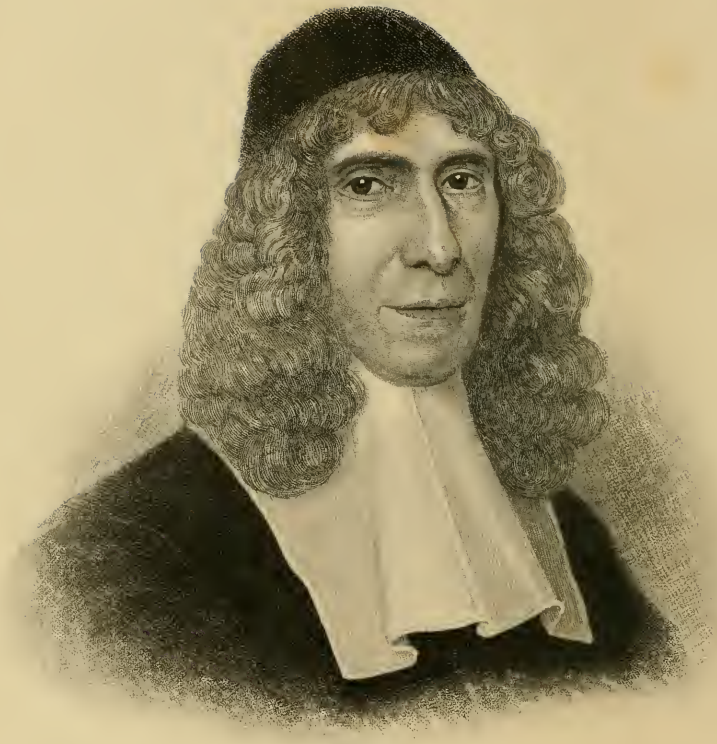


John Owen

THE

WORKS

OF

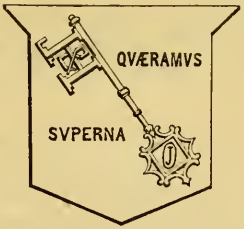
JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED

BY THE REV. WILLIAM H. GOOLD,

EDINBURGH.

VOL. I.



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GENERAL PREFACE.

It would be presumption to enter upon any commendation of John Owen as an author and divine. His works will continue to gather round them the respect and admiration of the Church of Christ, so long as reverence is cherished for the Christian faith. They have defects, which it is impossible to disguise. His style in general is deficient in grace and vivacity. His mode of discussing a subject is often tedious and prolix. Whatever amount of imaginative power his mind possessed, it seems to have been little cultivated and developed; and his chief excellence as an author, it must be admitted, consists "*non in flosculis verborum,—sed in pondere rerum.*" In the department of Biblical criticism, he himself disclaimed any pretensions to extensive learning. That science had made slender progress in his day, and the necessity for a careful revision of the text of Scripture, as well as the abundance of the materials which providentially existed for the accomplishment of the task, were scarcely known. We feel the less surprise that he should have committed himself to a strain of animadversion, full of prejudice and misapprehension, on the principles asserted in the Prolegomena and Appendix to Walton's Polyglott, when it is remembered that, after the lapse of half a century, and with all his eminent scholarship and erudition, Whitby, on the criticism of the sacred text, was not a step in advance of the Puritan divine.

With all this abatement on the praise which is due to Owen, his signal merits as an author have shed lustre on his name. He was great in the higher attributes of erudition; for he excelled, if not in the learning that is conversant about dates, and facts, and words, most assuredly in the learning of thought; and his sentences are sometimes impregnated with an amount of meaning that indicates vast stores of information on the views prevalent in past ages regarding the doctrines of Christianity. His treatises on experimental religion are yet unrivalled; and it is wonderful with what ease

and point he brings the highest principles of the faith to bear on the workings of the human heart, and the details of Christian experience. His controversial writings, apart from their intrinsic merits, have a *relative* value that is perhaps too much overlooked, and renders them indispensable in any good collection of British literature. His writings on toleration are an anticipation of much that has made the name of Locke immortal among the political authors of Great Britain; and there is truth in the assertion, that the philosopher "ploughed with the heifer of the Independent." His work on Arminianism was the first attempt to exhibit a systematic view of the theology which is known by that designation; and in his controversy with John Goodwin, he had to deal with by far its ablest advocate. His elaborate refutation of Socinianism is historically interesting and important, as addressed in reply to Biddle, who first established a Socinian congregation in England. Of his work entitled, "A Vindication of the Animadversions on the Popish Controversy," it is said by Orme, that "it embraces the substance of the Popish controversy." But it is hardly our province to offer any criticism upon the writings of our author. We cannot refrain, however, from quoting a brief but very complete judgment pronounced on his merits by a divine whose eminent worth and spiritual sagacity enabled him to appreciate the higher qualities of Owen, and who cannot be accused of any denominational prejudice in his favour. Indeed, some allusions at the close of the extract indicate, that, in the encomium he passes upon the Puritan, his candour triumphs over some degree of bias against him. Stillingfleet, the champion of the Anglican Church, when he replied to Owen's strictures on his sermon entitled, "The Mischief of Separation," acknowledges "the civility and decent language" of his antagonist.

"The divines of the Puritan school, however (with due allowance for the prevalent tone of scholastic subtleties), supply to the Ministerial student a large fund of useful and edifying instruction. If they be less clear and simple in their doctrinal statements than the Reformers, they enter more deeply into the sympathies of Christian experience. Profoundly versed in spiritual tactics—the habits and exercises of the human heart—they are equally qualified to awaken conviction and to administer consolation, laying open the man to himself with peculiar closeness of application; stripping him of his false dependencies, and exhibiting before him the light and influence of the Evangelical remedy for his distress. Owen stands pre-eminent among the writers of this school. 'His scholars' (as Mr Cecil observes) 'will be more profound and enlarged, and better furnished, than those of most other writers.' Among his voluminous works, we may mark his

Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews (with all its prolixity), as probably the most elaborate and instructive comment upon a detached portion of Scripture. His work on the Spirit (though discordant in some particulars from the principles of our church) embraces the most comprehensive view of this vitally-important subject. His Exposition of Psalm cxxx. exhibits the most full and unfettered display of divine forgiveness, admirably suited to the perplexities of exercised Christians. His Tracts upon 'Understanding the Mind of God in Scripture,' and 'The Reason of Faith,' manifest his usual accuracy of spiritual discernment. His treatises upon Indwelling Sin, Mortification of Sin, the Power of Temptation, and the Danger of Apostasy,—mark uncommon depths of exploring the secrecies of the heart. His view of Spiritual-mindedness draws out a graphic delineation of the tastes and features of the new character. And indeed, upon the whole,—for luminous exposition, and powerful defence of scriptural doctrine,—for determined enforcement of practical obligation,—for skilful anatomy of the self-deceitfulness of the heart, and for a detailed and wise treatment of the diversified exercises of the Christian's heart,—he stands probably unrivalled. The mixture of human infirmity with such transcendent excellence will be found in an unhappy political bias—in an inveterate dislike to episcopal government, and (as regards the character of his Theology) a too close and constant endeavour to model the principles of the Gospel according to the proportions of human systems. But who would refuse to dig into the golden mine from disgust at the base alloy that will ever be found to mingle itself with the ore?" And in a note he adds, "Though his works will be the Minister's constant companion through his course, yet are they most valuable parts of his preparatory study, as exhibiting scriptural doctrines in an experimental mould and in practical influence,—a complete pattern of that form of Ministry which equally adapts itself to the various purposes of our office."[1]

It was to be expected, if such was their value, that his works should enjoy an extensive circulation. Nor was their popularity confined to England. They have repeatedly appeared in the language of Holland; and by the Dutch divines the most favourable mention is made of the various treatises of our pious and learned Puritan. We are informed by Dr Steven,[2] that his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews was so highly prized by Mr Simon Commenicq, an opulent merchant in Rotterdam, that he ably translated the work,

[1] The Christian Ministry, p. 42–44, by the Rev. Charles Bridges, A.M.
[2] See his interesting History of the British Churches in the Netherlands.

and had it printed in seven volumes quarto (Amsterdam, 1733–1740), and gratuitously circulated most of the impression. His work which bears the title, ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΥΜΕΝΑ ΠΑΝΤΟΔΑΠΑ, &c., originally published at Oxford in 1661, must have been highly esteemed abroad, as it was reprinted at Bremen in 1684, and at Franeker in 1700.[1]

In Scotland, the influence exerted by Owen's writings has been very great. They imbued with their own manly, solid, and scriptural character, the warm and evangelical theology of the early fathers of the Scottish Secession,—in some respects the only distinctive school of theology which Scotland has produced. The best modern edition of his commentary on the Hebrews we owe to the care and industry of Dr Wright, a minister of the Established Church in Stirling. In the list of subscribers to a folio volume of Owen's works, there are twenty names connected with the nobility, and of these fifteen belong to Scotland.

So early as the year 1721, the project seems to have been seriously entertained of collecting and publishing, in a series of uniform volumes, a complete edition of his works. A large and elegant folio, to which we have just referred, then issued from the London press, containing his Sermons, his Tracts (either already published or existing hitherto as manuscript in the possession of his friends), and the Latin Orations which he delivered when vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford. Prefixed to it is an excellent likeness of Owen, and it is dedicated to Sir John Hartopp, who had been his intimate friend, and who, at the advanced age of eighty-four, still survived him,

[1] Mr Ryland of Northampton entertained a strong opinion in regard to the value of the same work. In a tract entitled, "A Select Library for a Student of Divinity," he gives an estimate of its merits with an amusing intensity of expression. "This book," says he, "bears the same rank, and has the same relation to the study of divinity, which the 'Principia' of Sir Isaac Newton bears to the true system of the world, in the study of natural philosophy; and it is of equal importance to all young divines which that great man's work is to young philosophers. —Dr Owen wrote this most learned of all his works in the meridian of his life, when he was vice-chancellor of Oxford, and published it soon after he quitted that office. This book gives an account of the nature, source, and study of true divinity in all ages, but especially since the Christian dispensation of the glorious Gospel. The last chapters of the book are peculiarly sweet and excellent; his directions to students how to proceed in attaining furniture for their sacred office, are wise, serious, and evangelical in the highest degree. Nothing can be more rich, savoury, and divine. I am ashamed of my countrymen for their ignorance of this incomparable work,—perhaps the very *greatest* of the *kind* that ever was written by a British divine; and it now lies buried in dust, amidst the lumber of a bookseller's garret, whilst a thousand volumes of wretched trash in divinity, with their pompous bindings, stand as monuments of human folly, in our book-cases and libraries." See Dr Cotton Mather's "Student and Preacher," republished by John Ryland, A.M. of Northampton, 1781.

and contributed the most important materials in the Memoir of his Life by Asty, which appears at the commencement of the volume. Although Asty signed the epistle dedicatory, and wrote the memoir, the preface is subscribed by other names as well as his own,—John Nesbitt, Matthew Clarke, Thomas Ridgley, D.D., and Thomas Bradbury, eminent Independent ministers in London. From this preface we learn that these gentlemen were desirous to publish all the treatises of Owen in volumes corresponding in size and appearance with the one ushered under their auspices into public notice. There was a large body of subscribers to it, amounting in number to three hundred and seventy-five. The editors, accordingly, felt themselves bound to acknowledge the "uncommon encouragement" which as yet they had received to persevere in their undertaking. The scheme, however, proved abortive;—nothing appeared in addition to the volume which we have just described. The circumstance is much to be regretted, as the editors evince a laudable degree of care in their task, so far as it had proceeded. The memory of Owen was yet fresh, and no difficulty at that time would have been experienced in collecting all the genuine productions of a divine to whose literary industry the Church of Christ had been so largely indebted. It would seem to have been the practice of that age, whenever any author died whose works had commanded an extensive circulation in religious society, immediately to issue a collected edition of them in volumes of folio size, according to the prevailing taste. Manton died in 1677, and during the years 1681–1691 his works were collected into five such volumes. Thomas Goodwin died in 1679, and the five volumes of his collected works were issued from 1681 to 1696. Charnock died in 1680, and forthwith, in 1684, his works were published in two volumes. Flavel died in 1691, and in 1701 the edition of his works in two volumes was printed. Bates died in 1699, and in the following year a volume, including all his productions, was given to the public. Howe died in 1705, and a complete edition of his works, in two volumes, appeared in 1724. It may seem strange that it should have fared differently with the works of Owen, whose name towers into just pre-eminence among all his venerable compeers in Puritan literature. It serves to illustrate the comparative extent of his labours, as well as to indicate, perhaps, the special difficulty which may have prevented the same honour and service being rendered to his memory by the publication of his collected works, when we bear in mind that one of them, his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, occupies of itself alone—four goodly folios.

Several treatises of Owen have won for themselves a high place in

the standard theology of our country, and have, accordingly, during the last century, passed through innumerable editions; but it was not till 1826 that another and more successful effort was made to enrich our theological literature with a uniform edition of all his works. The credit of this undertaking is due to the enterprise of Mr Baynes, the London publisher. The edition was comprised in twenty-one octavo volumes,—the first, however, consisting of the Memoir of Owen's Life and Writings by Mr Orme,—and was printed under the editorial care of Mr Russell, a Dissenting minister in the neighbourhood of London. As the first attempt[1] to collect the works of Owen, —an attempt, the difficulty of which may be inferred from the fact that in his lifetime Owen himself had for years lost sight of some of his own treatises,—and to publish them in a respectable form, it deserved well of the Christian public; and was indeed favourably received, for the subscribers to it rose to the number of three hundred and forty-six, and the impression, it is believed, has been long since exhausted.

The price at which, whether from its scarcity or its size, the edition of 1826 stood, prevented many from purchasing it who cherished an admiration for the writings of this great Nonconformist divine. A strong desire was evinced, in various ways, that his works might be issued in a form more accessible to the generality of the religious community. The publishers of the present edition lay claim to nothing more than the discernment by which they were led to mark, and the zeal with which they have endeavoured to supply, what was felt to be a want and desideratum by the public. They have been fully justified in the belief under which they were induced to embark in this undertaking, by the number of subscribers to this edition,—a number almost unprecedented in the history of religious publications, and extending to nearly three thousand.

They had hardly begun to print, before they became aware, on a thorough examination of the previous edition, from which they intended to print, that on other grounds besides the scarcity of the former one, a new edition was imperatively required. It would be invidious to animadvert in disparaging terms on the manner in which the works of Owen have been generally published. Every effort to extend the knowledge of them is entitled to a cordial meed of approbation. It is but justice to the reader, however, that he should be

[1] A statement occurs in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" that Owen's works are printed in seven folio volumes. If it be meant that there are seven folio volumes of Owen's works, there is a sense in which the statement is true; but the folios must be of unprecedented size which could include *all* the works of our author in this number. It is an obvious mistake.

informed on what principles the editorship of the present issue of his works has been conducted.

It was necessary that, in the simple matter of printing, greater accuracy should be studied than appears in previous editions. From the first, the publications of our author suffered greatly in this respect. He complains that the "Theologoumena" had been much disfigured with errors, "nobis a prælo a capite ad calcem operis absentibus." He appends a humorous note to his treatise entitled, "Salus Electorum Sanguis Iesu; or, the Death of Death in the Death of Christ," which we may quote, as illustrating how the inaccuracies in the old editions may have arisen. In reference to a list of errata that follows, he says, "I must inform the reader, that I cannot own any of his censures until he shall have corrected these errata, and allowed, besides, many grains for literal faults, viz., *parius* for *parvus*, *let* for *set*, *him* for *them*, and the like; also mispointing and false accenting of Greek words, occasioned by my distance from the press; and something else, of which it would be too much tyranny in making the printer instrumental in the divulging." Subsequent editions evince little improvement in this direction. Even the edition of 1826—though manifesting some advance in point of correct printing—is not what it might have been.

No liberties have been taken with the text of the author. On the contrary, in order to restore it to its original purity, a diligent comparison has been instituted between recent editions of his works and the original edition, or at least some edition which, having been published during the lifetime of Owen, may be supposed to have been given to the public with his corrections, and under his own superintendence. Wherever any alteration seemed requisite, or an omission needed to be supplied, the words added have been placed in brackets, in order to distinguish them from the author's text. Slight grammatical errors have been corrected, but no change has been made on the venerable archaisms which sometimes occur in the modes of thought and expression which he was in the habit of using. Some accommodation of this kind to the usages of modern language may be quite proper in the publication of any of his treatises for popular use; but in a standard edition of his works such a course is altogether inexpedient. It seems a breach of faith with the author. It would unsettle the landmarks of British literature. It is demanded by no necessity, as hardly any words employed by Owen have become so obsolete as to be now unintelligible. In order, therefore, that the mind of our author should be expressed in his works in its full idiosyncrasy, it was felt a duty to abstain from any

rash intermeddling with the costume of his thoughts, and to adhere with scrupulous jealousy to the ancient text.

The punctuation has undergone a thorough revisal. Passages which, from negligence in this respect, were previously very obscure, have brightened into significance, so as even to impart to the style a measure of clearness and animation of which it might have been deemed incapable. In the more important treatises, we have endeavoured to make a judicious and sparing restoration of the Italics, of which copious use is made in the old editions. They were employed, not merely for the purpose of emphasis, but to indicate quotations, and the train of thought. Quotations are now denoted by the ordinary marks in modern printing. The Italics are retained, where emphasis seems to have been designed, and where they tend to give connection and vividness to the composition.

In common with the authors of that age, Owen indulged freely in divisions and subdivisions of any topic under his consideration. The numerals employed to indicate the progress of thought were found in much confusion,—omissions occurring even in the early editions which appeared before the author's death, and changes having been subsequently introduced (of course without the author's sanction), which often destroy the connection and force of his statements, and bewilder his readers in a labyrinthine maze of numeration. Care has been taken to rectify these errors, and the subdivisions are denoted by the usual gradation in the numerals—I, 1, (1), [1], first, and *first.* It would have been an advantage if we could have dispensed with this cumbrous and complex apparatus; but such a course would have been questionable in principle, and indeed, on a little examination, will be seen to have been impossible.

The Scripture references demanded serious attention. A score of errors has sometimes been detected in a single sheet. Occasionally, moreover, when the words of Scripture were quoted, whether from mistakes in transcription and printing, or in consequence of the quotations having been made from memory, several inaccuracies have been noticed. These have been all corrected. No attempt, however, has been made to interfere, when it was evident that the author, as he sometimes does, purposely varied the translation of the authorized version of the Scriptures, in order to elicit more fully the import of the original.

Perhaps the works of Owen have suffered most injustice in regard to his quotations from the Greek and Latin Fathers. Even the editions which were printed when he was himself alive, here abound in errors to a degree that is a scandal to the British press. The

circumstance can only be explained from the pressure of multifarious duties leaving the author little time to attend to the details in the printing of his own works. It would seem that this task was often devolved on others, who, in the department of the Greek and Latin citations, have not given much evidence of their competency for it. To these original errors many more were added in each successive edition, till some passages from the Fathers, but for the characters in which they were printed, when Greek, might have been Latin as well as Greek,—or when Latin, might have been Greek as well as Latin, for all the meaning that could be expiscated from them; and the riddle they presented to the reader could only be solved by the use of that suspicious instrument of criticism,—mere conjecture. So Herculean seemed the task of correcting and verifying these references and quotations, that Mr Russell, in 1826, expressly declined to undertake it. In a note to the treatise on the "Reason of Faith," he remarks, "The editor takes this opportunity of stating, that he does not undertake—nor would it be possible, without a prodigious, and at the same time almost useless, expenditure of time and labour, and a boundless accumulation of books—to verify the numerous quotations of Dr Owen from the Fathers, and schoolmen and controversialists of a more recent period." We have only to state, that, so far as circumstances permitted, the best attention of the present editor has been given to these quotations, and that at least all the most important of them have been duly verified and collated, and the proper reference given to their place in the writings of the Father from whom they may have been adduced.

A prefatory note has commonly been given to the different treatises. It is intended by the note simply to indicate the design of the treatise, to submit a brief analysis of its contents, and to specify the date of its original publication, the judgment that has been formed of its merits, and any circumstances of interest bearing on its character, or connected with its history. The perusal of a work presupposes some knowledge of its design and contents, before the reader is induced to devote his time to the examination of it. When old works are republished, there is no present impulse to discuss their merits, and the organs of periodical criticism seldom bestow on them a formal and detailed review; so that a reader is sometimes at a loss to judge of the treatise of an old author, whether it be worthy of his attention, or likely to interest him, or what precise object it was intended to serve. Prefatory notes, therefore, supplying a key to the author's intention, so far as it can be gathered, have been inserted in the present edition. Explanations have been sometimes

appended at the foot of the pages, in regard to any statements or allusions that general readers might fail to understand. The editor, however, has been anxious not to overlay the text in any instance with a parade of authorities and references, seeking in his duties to be under the influence of the sentiment,—*Prodesse quam conspici.*

To promote facility of reference to the various productions of our author, they have been arranged in three divisions,—Doctrinal, Practical, and Controversial, and in each of these divisions the works have been given, as far as possible, according to the years in which they were published. It would be vain to attempt rigid precision and accuracy in any such arrangement that might be adopted. There are treatises which are at once doctrinal and practical in their nature. Some advantages would have accrued had the chronological order been followed, and had the works been inserted in this edition altogether according to the date of their original publication. But much confusion and irregularity would have been the result, and treatises, among which an obvious affinity existed in their subject and design, would not have been included in the same volume.

A complete index will be given in the last volume, embracing the Greek and Hebrew words quoted from Scripture, the texts explained, and the subjects discussed by our author.

It only remains for the editor to express his obligations to the Rev. John Edmondston of Ashkirk, whose aid has been invaluable, especially in the department of the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew quotations; to the Rev. John Cunningham, LL.D., who kindly undertook the research and inquiries that were found necessary in London; and to the custodiers of the different public libraries in Edinburgh, through whose courtesy free access was granted to them, in order to prosecute the business of collation.

The best thanks of the publishers are due to the Rev. Andrew Thomson, for the Memoir of Owen which graces this edition of his works; and to the trustees of the Lancashire Independent College, for the use of a portrait which belongs to the library of the college, and from which the portrait at the beginning of this volume has been engraved. The engraving is a very truthful representation of the countenance of Owen, according to the original painting from which it has been taken, and which, on the whole, has been preferred to any other likeness of him, as more in harmony with the depth and dignity of his character.

There are some important publications of Owen which were not

included in Mr Russell's edition. The Exercitations on the Sabbath do not appear in it, as they belonged to the preliminary dissertations prefixed to the Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They were issued separately by our author, in order to diffuse sound views on the obligation of the Sabbath, among a wider circle of readers than his ponderous commentary was likely to overtake. Dr Wright restored them to their proper place in the introduction to the commentary. The "Theologoumena," &c., also was not comprehended in the edition of 1826. In order to render this edition quite complete, the publishers contemplate a separate arrangement, by which subscribers, should a demand exist for it, will be supplied with the "Theologoumena," and any other productions of our author not included in the previous volumes of this edition. There is a probability, also, from a desire already expressed for it, that the Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews—the noblest monument of Owen's learning—will be published uniform with this edition of his works.

With these statements and explanations, the public must be left to judge of the merits and value of this edition of Owen's works. The editor may be permitted to express his own sense of the importance of the charge with which he has been intrusted, and his ardent desire that the volumes issued under his superintendence may prove, in elegance and correctness, worthy of the precious treatises contained in them, and a befitting monument to the name and memory of Owen. He was called by a sudden and urgent application to undertake these editorial labours, involving an expenditure of time and an amount of care and research beyond his own anticipation, and such as few are in circumstances to appreciate. No Christian man in his position could divest himself of solemn feeling, under the reflection that this publication, from the wide circulation already insured to it, must exert a mighty influence in guiding the minds of men, and moulding their habits of thought and action,—a feeling relieved only by the consideration that the principles of Owen were a close and faithful transcript of the Gospel of Christ, and that multitudes have already ripened for glory in meditation upon his pages. Should these volumes prove conducive to the same result, and perhaps on a wider scale, from the increased circulation now given to religious treatises of such sterling excellence, any amount of editorial care and labour will not be misspent. The labour has even already been its own reward; nor was it a mean ambition, to have one's name linked, by a connection however humble, with the great Nonconformist,

whose writings in defence of toleration, and in rebuke of tyranny, did much to secure for us the rich inheritance of freedom and civil privilege in which we rejoice, and whose theology has stamped a deep and lasting impress on the religious character and tendencies of his nation.

W. H. G.

Edinburgh, *August* 1850.

LIFE OF DR OWEN.

BY REV. ANDREW THOMSON, B.A.,

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"Semper quidem operæ pretium fuit illustres sanctorum describere vitas, ut sint in speculum et exemplum et quoddam veluti condimentum vitæ hominum super terram. Per hoc enim quodammodo apud nos etiam post mortem vivunt, multosque ex iis qui viventes mortui sunt, ad veram vitam provocant et revocant."

BERNARD.

LIFE OF DR OWEN.

CHAP. I.

HIS STUDENT-LIFE.

It is matter of just regret and complaint that no elaborate contemporary memoir of this great Puritan was ever written. Twenty years after his death, Cotton Mather, in his "Magnalia Americana Christi," declared "that the church of God was wronged, in that the life of the great John Owen was not written;" and it was only when twenty years more had elapsed that a life of Owen at length appeared, from the pen of Mr Asty, a respectable Independent minister in London; which, though written under the eye of Sir John Hartopp, a particular friend of Owen, and for many years a member of his church, is chargeable with numerous inaccuracies, and so scanty withal, as "not to contain so many pages as Owen has written books."[1] In addition to this, an equally brief anonymous memoir has fallen into our hands, professing to have been written by one who "had the honour to know this eminent person well, and to hear him frequently; though he must confess that he had not then years and experience enough to conceive a suitable idea of the Doctor's great worth." But the student who should wish to search for voluminous contemporary records and early reminiscences of Owen, will look in vain for such full and accurate memorials as Dr Edmund Calamy has given us of Howe; or for such an inexhaustible storehouse of incident, and almost redundance of mental portraiture, as Richard Baxter has given us of himself. The sources from which the modern biographer must draw his notices of Owen, besides those already named, are to some extent the representations of adversaries, who could not be silent on so great a name, or withhold reluctant praise; the not infrequent allusions to Owen in the lives of his contemporaries; the statements of general history and biography,—such as are to be found in the pages of Neal, Calamy, Middleton, Palmer, and others; and, perhaps the most

[1] Orme's Memoirs of Owen, p. 2.

valuable and interesting of all, the many unconscious touches of autobiography which may be found in his prefaces to his various works. Of all of these Mr Orme has made excellent use in his Life of Owen; which is a remarkable specimen of untiring research, solid judgment and ability in the disposal of his materials, and, making some allowance for honest bias, of biographical fidelity: and from all of these, and especially from Mr Orme himself, we shall gather the details of our biographical sketch and estimate of Owen.

The genealogy of the subject of our memoir leads us back to a family of high rank and reputation in Wales, whose remoter links connect it with the five regal tribes. In the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Mary, we meet with the name of Lewis Owen as Vice-chamberlain and Baron of the Exchequer in North Wales, and High Sheriff of the county of Merioneth; as honoured by correspondence with those monarchs in reference to the affairs of Wales, and as going forth on a commission to clear the country of those felons and outlaws who had sought refuge in great numbers among its mountains, during the turbulence and relaxed authority that had arisen from the long wars between the houses of York and Lancaster. At a later period this honoured ancestor fell a sacrifice to his fidelity as a magistrate; for, on his return from the assizes in Montgomeryshire, he fell into the hands of a band of outlaws, who had taken a vow of revenge against him on account of the capture of their companions, and, deserted by all but one faithful friend, was murdered by them in the woods of Monthrey.[1]

Humphrey Owen, a branch of this same family, married Susan, a grand-daughter of Lewis Owen; and to him there were born in succession fifteen sons, the youngest of whom was Henry Owen. Henry was dedicated by his parents to office in the church, and having received an education, in language, philosophy, and divinity, at Oxford, in the course of time became vicar of Stadham, in Oxfordshire. Here he proved himself so "painful a labourer in the vineyard of the Lord," and so uncompromising an advocate for reformation in the church, as to receive testimony to his fidelity in the jealousy and displeasure of the dominant ecclesiastical powers, and to be branded with the name of "Puritan." To this worthy vicar there was born, at Stadham, in the year 1616, a second son, JOHN OWEN, the subject of this memoir, who was destined to shed a new renown on their ancient house, and to eclipse, by the more substantial glory of his virtues, learning, and genius, the dim lustre of their regal lineage.[2]

Little is known regarding the childhood of Owen; and no records whatever have descended to tell us of the mother to whom was committed the training of his most susceptible years, and who was to be

[1] Asty's Memoir, p. ii. Anonymous Memoir, p. v. [2] Ibid.

the Monnica to this future Augustine. There is reason to think that he received the elements of a common education from the good vicar himself, under the domestic roof at Stadham; while, after a few years of home education, he was transferred to a private academy at Oxford, where he entered on his classical studies under the superintendence of Edward Sylvester, a tutor of eminence, several of whose pupils rose to the highest distinction, and even won for themselves at no distant date an undying fame. A comparison of dates makes it unlikely that the two were playmates; but it is interesting to notice, that the same quiet institution, in the parish of All-Saints, which now received within its walls the future great theologian of the Puritans, was also the place in which was initiated into the Greek and Roman tongues the immortal Chillingworth,—of whose great work, "The Religion of Protestants," it is not too much to say, that it is sufficient to shed honour, not on a university merely, but on an age.[1] One fact will suffice to show the energy with which the young pupil applied himself to his studies, as well as the unusually early development of his faculties, that, at the age of twelve, he was found to have outgrown the instructions of Sylvester and to be ripe for the university. He was, accordingly, entered a student at Queen's College at this age, which, in the case of most youths, would have been most injudiciously premature, and, even at this period, must have seemed strangely early; for, in looking into the lives of some of the most eminent of his contemporaries, we meet with no instance of similar precocity. Bishop Hall, for example, enrolled himself at Cambridge at fifteen,[2] while his great Puritan contemporary, John Howe, did not enter Oxford until he had reached the riper age of seventeen.[3]

Few men of great eminence appear to have occupied the chairs of the university at this period; but Owen was fortunate enough to have his studies in mathematics and philosophy superintended by a tutor of solid attainments and subsequent high distinction,—Thomas Barlow, then a fellow of Queen's College, afterwards its provost, and who, in course of time, was elevated to the see of Lincoln.[4] The boy-student devoted himself to the various branches of learning with an intensity that would have unhinged most minds, and broken in pieces any

[1] Wood's Athenæ Oxonienses, p. 97. Orme, p. 7.
[2] Hamilton's Memoir of Bishop Hall, p. viii.
[3] Urwick's Life of Howe, p. vi.
[4] We have additional authority for many of the above facts in one of the *larger* epitaphs on Owen by his friend the Rev. T. Gilbert of Oxford; some lines of which we subjoin:—

"Literis natus, literis innutritus, totusque deditus;
Donec animata plane evasit bibliotheca:
Authoribus classicis, qua Græcis, qua Latinis,
Sub Edv. Sylvestro, scholæ privatæ Oxonii moderatore
Operam navavit satis felicem:
Feliciorem adhuc studiis philosophicis,
Magno sub Barlovio, coll. reginalis, id tempus, socio."

bodily constitution except the most robust. For several years of his university curriculum he allowed himself only four hours of the night for sleep, though he had the wisdom so far to counteract the injurious influence of sedentary habits and excessive mental toil, by having recourse to bodily recreation in some of its most robust and even violent forms. Leaping, throwing the bar, bell-ringing, and similar amusements, occasionally allured him from his books; and it may perhaps surprise some, who conceive of the men of that age as unsocial and unfriendly to all the lighter graces and accomplishments, to learn that Owen received lessons in music from Dr Thomas Wilson, a celebrated performer on the flute, and the favourite preceptor in the same elegant and delightful art of Charles I. It may perhaps have been from grateful recollections of these youthful and fascinating exercises, in which the student had been accustomed to unbend from too protracted and severe studies, that Owen at a future period, when elevated to the vice-chancellorship of Oxford, appointed his early tutor professor of music in the university.[1]

Still, the hours which are taken from needful rest are not redeemed, but borrowed, and must be paid back with double interest in future life; and Owen, when he began to feel his iron frame required to pay the penalty of his youthful enthusiasm, was accustomed to declare that he would willingly part with all the learning he had accumulated by such means, if he might but recover the health which he had lost in the gaining of it. And he was wont to confess with a far profounder sorrow, not unmixed with shame, that no holy oil at this time fed his midnight lamp; but that the great motive which had borne him up, during those days and nights of consuming toil, was an ambition to rise to distinction and power in the church. We can well believe that the severity of this self-condemnation would, by a judge more tender than himself, have so far been mitigated by the knowledge of another motive, which must have had considerable influence upon his mind, arising from the fact that his father had been unable to render him any adequate pecuniary assistance, and that he had hitherto been indebted for his support to the liberality of an uncle in Wales. But still, when more amiable motives have been allowed their full force, a mere earthly ambition must be acknowledged to have been the main-spring of all his past efforts; and we cannot doubt that, when he returned to the university at a future period, these condemnatory reminiscences arose strongly in his mind, and that, like Philip Henry in similar circumstances, while thanking God that his course had been unstained by vices, he could insert in his book, "A tear dropped over my university sins."[2]

[1] Asty, p. iii. Orme, p. 9.
[2] Bogue and Bennet's History of Dissenters, ii. 211, 226.

And here let us pause for a moment, to look at the circumstances of another student, who was destined at a future day to shine with Owen in the same bright constellation. While Owen was walking amid the majestic structures and academic shades of Oxford, or bending over the midnight page, Richard Baxter might have been seen amid the enchanting scenery of Ludlow Castle, or, later still, in the small village of Wroxeter, with little help or guidance from man, but, under the promptings of an indomitable will, and with an omnivorous appetite for knowledge, allowing no difficulties or discouragements to damp the ardour of his pursuits. Without the advantage of the systematic training of a university, or the command of the rich stores of its libraries, this was almost compensated to his athletic soul by the more discursive and varied range which both his tastes and his necessities thus gave to his studies. In the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Anselm, and Duns Scotus, which to most minds would have been dry and barren as the sands of the desert, his acute intellect found high exercise and real delight, and rejoiced in whetting and exercising on them its dialectic powers, until he could rival in subtle and shadowy distinctions those ghostly schoolmen. Two years the senior of Owen, he was also "in Christ" before him; and while the Oxford student was still feeding the fires of an earth-born ambition, Baxter had learned from Sibbs' Bruised Reed, and from his Bible, the art of holy meditation; and, even in the later years of his student-life, might have been seen at that hour when it was too dark to read and too early to light his lamp, devoting its sacred moments to thinking of heaven and anticipations of the "saints' everlasting rest."[1] But the same grace was soon to descend upon the soul of Owen, and, co-operating with providential occurrences, to withdraw him for ever from the poor day-dreams of a mere earthly ambition. While he was measuring out for himself a course which, if successful, would probably have made him a secular churchman, and even an intolerant persecutor, Christ had said of him, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Let us now trace the influences and events which brought about in the mind and outward circumstances of Owen this mighty change.

We have no minute information regarding the means by which his mind was first turned with serious personal interest to the supreme subject of religion. Perhaps the dormant seeds of early instruction that had been lodged in his mind under the roof of the humble vicarage now began to live; perhaps some of those truths which he was storing in his mind as matter of mere intellectual furniture and accomplishment had unexpectedly reached his heart; or the earnest struggles on religious questions that were beginning to agitate the

[1] Jenkyn's Essay on the Life of Baxter, pp. iii.–v.

kingdom had, in some measure, arrested the sympathy of the young recluse; or thoughts of a more serious kind than he had yet entertained had arisen in his mind, he knew not how, like invisible and life-awakening spring-breezes; or all these things combined may have been employed as influences in bringing him at length to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." At all events, we have Owen's own testimony to the fact, that in the later years of his university life, the Divine Spirit began to work in his soul a new class of thoughts and emotions; and though it was not until a later period that he entered upon the full peace and holy liberty of the kingdom of God, he was brought even then to submit his life to the supreme control of religious principle, and to ask, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

While his mind was undergoing this great change, events were occurring in the government of the university which were fitted to put his religious principle to the test, and to try it, as it were, by fire. William Laud having, by a succession of rapid advancements, been raised to the chancellorship of Oxford, hastened to introduce into it those Romish innovations which, as the privy councillor and principal adviser of Charles, and the intimate associate of Strafford, he had already done much to infuse into the general ecclesiastical policy of the nation. The naturally arrogant and domineering spirit of this narrow-minded ecclesiastic, whom even Clarendon describes as "rough of temper, impatient of contradiction, and arbitrary,"[1] had far more to do with those oppressive measures which marked his fatal ecclesiastical supremacy, than those mistaken views of the rights of conscience which at this period dragged so many better and more amiable men into the ranks of persecutors. Accordingly, we find him requiring the adoption, by the university, of many of those rites and ceremonials which savoured the most strongly of Popish superstitions, and in some instances were identical with them, and which the Reformers of England had soonest renounced and most severely condemned; the penalty of resistance to this demand being nothing less than expulsion from the university.

This bold innovation at once dragged Owen from the privacy of his student-life into all the stern struggles of a public career. And his mind, delivered by the fear of God from every other fear, was not slow in resolving on resistance to the bigoted prelate's intolerant statutes. Many of the rites which Laud imposed were such as he in conscience believed to be divinely forbidden; and even things which, if left unimposed, might have been borne with as matters of indifference, when authoritatively enjoined as of equal obligation with divine appointments, he felt ought to be resisted as an invasion of the divine prero-

[1] Heylin's Life of Laud, p. 252.

gative and the rights of conscience,—"a teaching for doctrines of the commandments of men." This was the ground that had been occupied by the Puritans from the days of Elizabeth, when Ridley and Latimer had "played the man in the fire;" and though we have no record of Owen's mental exercise at this period, yet, with the course that was actually taken by him before us, we cannot doubt that he now unconsciously felt his way to this first Puritan standing-point, and that the following passage, written by him long afterwards, expresses the principles which animated his mind and decided his movements:—

"They [believers] will receive nothing, practise nothing, own nothing in His worship, but what is of His appointment. They know that from the foundation of the world he never did allow, nor ever will, that in any thing the will of the creatures should be the measure of his honour, or the principle of his worship, either as to matter or manner. It was a witty and true sense that one gave of the Second Commandment, '*Non imago, non simulachrum prohibetur, sed, non facies tibi;*'—it is a making to ourselves, an inventing, a finding out ways of worship, or means of honouring God, not by him appointed, that is so severely forbidden. Believers know what entertainment all will-worship finds with God. 'Who hath required this at your hand?' and, 'In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the traditions of men,' is the best it meets with. I shall take leave to say what is upon my heart, and what (the Lord assisting) I shall willingly endeavour to make good against all the world,—namely, that that principle, that the church hath power to institute and appoint any thing or ceremony belonging to the worship of God, either as to matter or to manner, beyond the orderly observance of such circumstances as necessarily attend such ordinances as Christ himself hath instituted, lies at the bottom of all the horrible superstition and idolatry, of all the confusion, blood, persecution, and wars, that have for so long a season spread themselves over the face of the Christian world; and that it is the design of a great part of the Book of the Revelation to make a discovery of this truth.

"And I doubt not but that the great controversy which God hath had with this nation for so many years, and which he hath pursued with so much anger and indignation, was upon this account, that, contrary to the glorious light of the Gospel, which shone among us, the wills and fancies of men, under the name of order, decency, and authority of the church (a chimera that none knew what it was, nor wherein the power did consist, nor in whom reside), were imposed on men in the ways and worship of God. Neither was all that pretence of glory, beauty, comeliness, and conformity, that then was pleaded, any thing more or less than what God doth so describe in the Church

of Israel, Ezek. xvi. 25, and forwards. Hence was the Spirit of God in prayer derided,—hence was the powerful preaching of the Gospel despised,—hence was the Sabbath-day decried,—hence was holiness stigmatized and persecuted. To what end? That Jesus Christ might be deposed from the sole power of law-making in his church,—that the true husband might be thrust aside, and adulterers of his spouse embraced,—that taskmasters might be appointed in and over his house, which he never *gave to his church*, Eph. iv. 11,—that a ceremonious, pompous, outward show-worship, drawn from Pagan, Judaical, and Antichristian observances, might be introduced; of all which there is not one word, tittle, or iota in the whole book of God. This, then, they who hold communion with Christ are careful of,—they will admit nothing, practise nothing, in the worship of God, private or public, but what they have his warrant for. Unless it comes in his name, with 'Thus saith the Lord Jesus,' they will not hear an angel from heaven."[1]

While the well-informed conscience of Owen thus distinctly forbade conformity, every consideration of seeming worldly interest strongly pleaded for pliant acquiescence in the statutes of Laud. To abandon Oxford, was to dash from him at once all those fair prospects which had hitherto shone before him in his career as a student,—to shut against himself the door, not only of honourable preferment, but, as it probably at this time appeared to his mind, of Christian usefulness,—to incur the inevitable displeasure of that prelate, whose keen and sleepless efforts to search out all who were opposed to his policy had already subjected every corner of the realm to a vigilant and minute inspection, and whose cruel and malignant spirit was already finding desolating scope in the unconstitutional measures and atrocities of the Star Chamber and the High Commission. And even though these latter perils might seem to be remote as yet from his head, yet could he not be blind to the fact, that, by such a step, he might incur the implacable displeasure of his Royalist uncle in Wales, who had hitherto supplied him with the principal means of support at Oxford, and expressed his intention, in case of continued satisfaction with his conduct, of making him heir to his estates. Yet all these probable consequences of non-compliance Owen was willing to incur, rather than violate his sense of duty, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt;" and, at the age of twenty-one, might have been seen leaving behind him all the day-dreams and cherished associations of more than ten youthful years, and passing through the gates of Oxford self-exiled for conscience' sake. God was now educating him in a higher school than that of Oxford, and subjecting him to that fiery discipline by

[1] Owen on Communion with God, pp. 309, 310, fol. ed.

which he tempers and fashions his most chosen instruments. But "there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Ten years afterwards the banished student, who had thus nobly followed the light of conscience, lead where it might, was to be seen returning through those very gates to receive its highest honours,—to have intrusted to him the administration of its laws, and almost to occupy the very seat of power from which Laud had, in the interval, been ignominiously hurled.

Owen had "commenced master of arts" in his nineteenth year, and not long before leaving Oxford, had been admitted to orders by Bishop Bancroft. He now found a home unexpectedly opened to him in the house of Sir Philip Dormer of Ascot, who invited him to become chaplain to his family, and tutor to his eldest son; "in both which respects," says one of the oldest notices of Owen, "he acquitted himself with great satisfaction to Sir Robert and his family."[1] After some time, he accepted the situation of chaplain in the family of Lord Lovelace of Hurly, in Berkshire, where he appears to have enjoyed much kindness, and to have been duly appreciated.[2] But meanwhile the rent between Charles and his Parliament was widening apace. His frequent invasion of the constitutional rights of the other estates of the realm, his attempts to rule without a Parliament and to raise money by illegal means, his systematic violation of his most solemn pledges, his connivance at the innovating superstitions of Laud, and wanton violation of religious liberty, at length roused an impatient kingdom to resistance, drove the Parliament to the last resort of arms, and shook the land with the discord of civil war.[3] At such a crisis it is impossible for any man to remain neutral, and it found Owen and his patron of opposite sentiments. Lord Lovelace took up arms on the side of Charles, and of royal prerogative; all the convictions and sympathies of Owen were naturally with the army of the Parliament, and the cause of public liberty. Two consequences immediately followed from this to Owen,—his leaving the family of Lord Lovelace, and the complete estrangement of his Royalist uncle in Wales, who now finally disinherited him, and bestowed his estates and wealth upon another.

Leaving Berkshire, Owen now removed to London, and took up his residence in Charter-House Yard. Here he continued to suffer from that mental depression which had begun with his earliest religious anxieties at Oxford; and which, though partially relieved at intervals, had never yet been completely removed. Some influence is no doubt

[1] Anon. Mem., p. ix. [2] Wood's Athen. Oxon., p. 97.
[3] Vaughan's Memorials of the Stuart Dynasty, I., ch. vii.-xi.

to be ascribed to the discouraging outward circumstances in which his uncle's conduct had placed him, in deepening the gloom of those shadows which now cast themselves across his spirit; but the chief spring of his distress lay deeper,—in his perplexities and anxieties about his state with God. For years he had been under the power of religious principle, but he had not yet been borne into the region of settled peace; and at times the terrors of the Lord seemed still to compass him about. We have no means of ascertaining with certainty what were the causes of these dreadful conflicts in Owen's mind; whether an overwhelming sense of the holiness and rectitude of God; or perverse speculations about the secret purposes of God, when he should have been reposing in his revealed truths and all-embracing calls; or a self-righteous introversion of his thoughts upon himself, when he should have been standing in the full sun-light of the cross; or more mysterious deeps of anguish than any of these;—but we are disposed to think that his noble treatise on the "Forgiveness of Sin," written many years afterwards, is in a great degree the effect as well as the record of what he suffered now. Nothing is more certain than that some of the most precious treasures in our religious literature have thus come forth from the seven-times-heated furnace of mental suffering. The wondrous colloquies of Luther, in his "Introduction to the Galatians," reflect the conflicts of his own mighty spirit with unbelief; the "Pilgrim's Progress" is in no small degree the mental autobiography of Bunyan; and there is strong internal evidence that Owen's "Exposition of the 130th Psalm"—which is as full of Christian experience as of rich theology, and contains some of the noblest passages that Owen ever penned—is to a great extent the unconscious transcript of his present wanderings, and perplexities, and final deliverances.

But the time had come when the burden was to fall from Owen's shoulders; and few things in his life are more truly interesting than the means by which it was unloosed. Dr Edmund Calamy was at this time minister in Aldermanbury Chapel, and attracted multitudes by his manly eloquence. Owen had gone one Sabbath morning to hear the celebrated Presbyterian preacher, and was much disappointed when he saw an unknown stranger from the country enter the pulpit. His companion suggested that they should leave the chapel, and hasten to the place of worship of another celebrated preacher; but Owen's strength being already exhausted, he determined to remain. After a prayer of simple earnestness, the text was announced in these words of Matt. viii. 26, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Immediately it arrested the thoughts of Owen as appropriate to his present state of mind, and he breathed an inward prayer that God would be pleased by that minister to speak to his

condition. The prayer was heard, for the preacher stated and answered the very doubts that had long perplexed Owen's mind; and by the time that the discourse was ended, had succeeded in leading him forth into the sunshine of a settled peace. The most diligent efforts were used by Owen to discover the name of the preacher who had thus been to him "as an angel of God," but without success.[1]

There is a marked divine selection visible in the humble instrument that was thus employed to bring peace to Owen's mind. We trace in it the same wisdom that sent an humble Ananias to remove the scales from the eyes of Saul, and made the poor tent-maker and his wife the instructors of the eloquent Apollos. And can we doubt that when the fame of Owen's learning and intellectual power had spread far and wide, so that even foreign divines are said to have studied our language in order that they might read his works, the recollection of the mode of his own spiritual deliverance would repress all self-dependence and elation, and make him feel that the highest form of success in preaching was in no respect the monopoly of high intellectual gifts; but that in every instance it was, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord?"

CHAP. II.

HIS PASTORATE.

The mind of Owen, now effectually relieved from the burden of spiritual distress, soon recovered its elasticity and vigour; and in March 1642 he gave to the world his first literary production,—"The Display of Arminianism." In all likelihood he had been silently labouring at this work while in the families of Sir Philip Dormer and Lord Lovelace; more especially as his mental distress may have had some connection with a misunderstanding of certain of those points on which the Arminian controversy touches, and have led to their more full examination. But we may discover the principal occasion of the work in the ecclesiastical policy of the period, and in the strain of doctrinal sentiment which that policy had long aimed to foster and to propagate. Laud and his party had shown themselves as zealous for the peculiar dogmas of Arminianism, as for Romish rites and vestments and for passive obedience; and the dogmas had been received into royal favour because of their association with the advocacy of superstitious ceremonies and the defence of despotic rule. Arminianism having thus been constituted the exclusive way to preferment, had become

[1] Asty, p. v. Anon. Mem., p. x.

the fashionable creed; and a current of doctrine had flowed into the church which was rapidly changing the character of its ministrations, and bearing it away from those safe moorings at which its own Articles and its Reformers had fixed it.

A remark by Owen, in his address to the reader, correctly describes the Laudean policy: "Had a poor Puritan offended against half so many *canons* as they opposed *articles*, he had forfeited his livelihood, if not endangered his life." And in another passage he explains the progress of Arminianism in England: "The chief cause I take to be that which Æneas Sylvius gave, why more maintained the pope to be above the council than the council above the pope;—because the popes gave archbishoprics and bishoprics, &c., but the councils sued 'in forma pauperis,' and therefore could scarce get an advocate to plead their cause. The fates of our church having of late devolved the government of it on men tainted with this poison, Arminianism became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly beat poor naked Truth into a corner."

Owen's "Display" is a barrier raised against prevailing opinions. Each chapter contains a statement of the Arminian doctrine on the point discussed, with Owen's answer; while at the end of each chapter the Arminian doctrine is more briefly stated, in the language of some Arminian writer, and confronted in opposite columns by passages of Scripture. Undoubtedly there are some things charged upon the Arminianism of those times which belong rather to the family of Pelagian errors, and which the pious Arminian of our own day would at all events repudiate. Nor is it to be denied that the work is not free, in some parts, of the fault which clings to so much theological controversy,—that of making individuals responsible, not only for the opinions they avow, but for all the consequences that you may deduce from them; yet, withal, it is rich in matter which must have staggered the courtly theologians of the age,—is hung all round with massive Calvinistic armour; and, though written in a more scholastic form than most of Owen's subsequent works, gives indication of that spirit which was so characteristic of the Puritans, and pre-eminently of Owen, and which gave such a depth to their piety,—the spirit which connected all events with God, and bent with lowly and awe-struck feeling before the divine sovereignty.

Owen dedicated his work to "The Lords and Gentlemen of the Committee for Religion;" who appointed it to be printed by the Committee of the House of Commons for regulating the printing and publishing of books. Its publication is interesting on another account,—as having been the means of introducing him to his first pastoral charge. The incumbent of Fordham in Essex having been ejected from his living by the committee for purging the church of scanda-

lous ministers, Owen was invited by the same committee to occupy the vacant parish. Not long after his removal to Fordham, he was married to a lady of the name of Rooke. But nearly all the information that has descended to us regarding this union, from the earlier biographies, amounts to this,—that the lady bore to him eleven children, all of whom, except one daughter, died in early youth. This only daughter became the wife of a Welsh gentleman; but the union proving unhappy, she "returned to her kindred and to her father's house," and soon after died of consumption.

This period of Owen's early pastorate appears to have been one of the happiest of his life. Fordham is a secluded village, overhanging the fertile and pleasing valley of the Stour, which divides Suffolk from Essex. Its inhabitants, at the present day, number about seven hundred; but in the days of Owen they could not have been by any means so numerous. In this retreat, and surrounded by a not very dense rural population,[1] he was allowed to pursue in peace the quiet duties of a country parish, and knew nothing as yet of those more public and distracting responsibilities which he ever undertook with reluctance, and which he appears to have usually renounced with satisfaction. The spiritual interests of the parish having been neglected by his predecessor, he set himself with earnest system to break up the fallow ground, and to preach those truths which had still to his mind all the freshness of first love. The good Puritan practice of visiting and catechising from house to house gave him a large place in the affections of his people, as well as revealed to him the measure of their Christian intelligence; while his solid preaching soon gathered around him the inhabitants of his own parish, and even allured multitudes across the borders of the neighbouring parishes to listen to his weighty words. Like Baxter at Kidderminster, he was ere long cheered by witnessing one of those wide-spread and enduring reformations which have never followed on any agency save the earnest preaching of "Christ crucified."

The productions of his pen at this period indicate the current of his thoughts, and the liveliness of his evangelic zeal. The first of these is entitled, "The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished," and was published in 1643. Its main design is to "describe the means to be

[1] We are indebted for this information regarding the first scene of Owen's ministry to the Rev. Alexander Anderson, pastor of a Baptist Church, Colchester; who also informs us that the signature of Owen is still to be seen in the parochial register at Fordham (four miles distant), and that it has this peculiarity attached to it, that whilst all preceding it, and also succeeding, so far as he continued his examination, sign themselves "Parson," the usual designation of the time, his signature has the word "Pastor" invariably attached to it; showing that he deliberately, and from the first, "preferred the more scriptural term of 'pastor,' to the presuming designation of parson, more especially if we accept its common derivation, 'Persona ecclesiæ.'"

used by the people of God, distinct from church officers, for the increasing of divine knowledge in themselves and others," and to show how "the sacred calling may retain its ancient dignity, though the people of God be not deprived of their Christian liberty."[1] It bears internal evidence of having been drawn from him by the unscriptural assumptions of those ecclesiastics who sought to place their interdict on every thing like the agency of private members in the church, though there are particular passages aimed at those fiery persons who sought to introduce into the church the spirit of a wild democracy, and whose mode of making "all the Lord's people prophets," was to dispense with the inestimable benefits of a stated ministry. As it is the earliest, so it is one of the most useful of Owen's smaller treatises, and is remarkable for its skilful harmonizing of authority with liberty. How much of his axiomatic sagacity there is in the following sentence: "Truth revealed to any, carries with it an immovable persuasion of conscience that it ought to be published and spoken to others!"[2] And how much of wise restraint and rebuke in this: "Let not them who despise a faithful, painful minister in public, flatter themselves with hope of a blessing in private. Let them pretend what they will, they have not equal respect unto all God's ordinances!"[3] If Burnet's "Pastoral Care" and Baxter's "Reformed Pastor" may be named as the guides and counsellors of the ministers of that age, this tractate might well have been placed beside them as the hand-book of the people.[4]

We still trace the signs of the busy pastor in his next publication, which is entitled, "The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ Unfolded, in Two Short Catechisms;" the first being intended for young persons, the second for adults, and as an aid to parents in domestic instruction. We are reminded, as we look on the stalworth Puritan, who is soon to mingle in the great theological discussions of the day, thus preparing "milk for babes," of Johnson's admiring sentence on Isaac Watts: "Providing instruction for all ages, from those who were lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malebranche and Locke."[5]

During these years of his laborious and unostentatious pastorate, the solid reputation of Owen was extending, and on April 29, 1646, he was appointed to preach before Parliament, on occasion of its monthly fast. The discourse is founded on Acts xvi. 9, "A vision

[1] Preface, p. 10, ed. 1644. [2] P. 38. [3] P. 49.

[4] Owen quotes with approbation (p. 54) the judgment and practice of the Church of Scotland, as expressed in their Act of Assembly at Edinburgh, anno 1641. "Our Assembly also commandeth *godly conference* at all occasional meetings, or as God's providence shall dispose, as the Word of God commandeth, providing none invade the pastor's office, to preach the Word, who are not called thereunto by God and his church."

[5] Lives of the Poets, iv. 164.

appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us;" and is written in a style of popular eloquence by no means characteristic of the usual strain of Owen's writings. The thanks of the House were conveyed to Owen by Mr Fenner and Sir Philip Wentworth, and the discourse commanded to be printed. The evangelic zeal of the pastor of Fordham breaks forth, towards the close, in behalf of those parts of the empire which were destitute of religious instruction, and especially in behalf of his ancestral country, Wales: "When manna fell in the wilderness from the hand of the Lord, every one had an equal share. I would there were not now too great an inequality when secondarily in the hand of man, whereby some have all, and others none; some sheep daily picking the choice flowers of every pasture,—others wandering upon the barren mountains, without guide or food."[1] The glowing terms in which he dedicates his sermon to the Long Parliament, as "most deservedly celebrated through the whole world, and to be held in everlasting remembrance by all the inhabitants of this island," have drawn forth the disapprobation of some. But what contemporary opinion has been more justified by the calm judgment of later history? What English Parliament ever bore upon its roll such a list of patriots, or surrounded the immunities of the people with such constitutional guards? Even the grudging concession of Hume goes so far as to say that their conduct, with one exception, was such as "to entitle them to praise from all lovers of liberty."[2]

Not long after this, Owen's pastoral connection with Fordham was brought to a close. The "sequestered incumbent" whose place he had occupied died, and the right of presenting to the living having in this way reverted to the patron, it was given to another. The event became the occasion of introducing him to a wider sphere. The people of Coggeshall, an important market-town of Essex, about five miles distant, no sooner received the tidings of his deprivation than they sent a pressing invitation to him to become their minister,—an invitation which the patron, the Earl of Warwick, immediately confirmed. Unlike Fordham, this new charge had previously been diligently cultivated by a succession of faithful ministers; so that his work was not so much to lay the foundation as to build. He soon beheld himself surrounded by a congregation of nearly two thousand people, whose general religious consistency and Christian intelligence were a delight to his heart, and whose strong attachment to him subsequent events gave them abundant opportunities of testifying.[3]

Contemporaneously with these outward changes in Owen's position,

[1] Owen's Sermons, fol. ed., p. 214.
[2] Hume, History of England, vi. ch. li. Vaughan's Stuart Dynasty, ii. 74.
[3] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 100.

considerable changes also took place in his opinions on church government. His removal to Coggeshall is named as the period at which he renounced Presbytery; and the order of his church there is said to have been brought into a closer conformity with the Independent or Congregational model.

There were principles, however, retained by Owen, both on the subject of the ruling elder and of synods,—as we shall have occasion to show in noticing some of his later writings,—which prove that his Congregationalism was of a somewhat modified character, and which a moderate Presbyterian of our own times, though not vaunting as identical with his views, would yet hail as evidence that the gulf between himself and the Congregationalist is not impassable. But the Presbyterians of Owen's early days in general went much farther than those of the present age; and we deem it not the least of his honours that he refused to follow in their course. Not that we have any sympathy with those terms of unqualified censure with which the Presbyterians of that age have too often been characterized. During the period of their brief supremacy, they accomplished much for England. In proportion as we value those noble statements of doctrine, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, must we be grateful to the Presbyterians, who took so prominent and cordial a part in those deliberations which produced them. Well-informed and candid men of other religious parties have not been slow to admit that those districts of England which were brought under a Presbyterian pastorate and polity, made visible progress in Christian intelligence and piety; and many of those measures which were adopted by them in opposition to Cromwell, and which have often been ascribed to hostility to liberty, were, in fact, honest endeavours on their part to restore a constitutional government. But the intolerant spirit which animated them at this particular juncture is neither to be extenuated nor denied.

Having recently risen to power, they had become dazzled by the dream of an impracticable uniformity, and, as Baxter, himself a Presbyterian, complains, had shown too great a readiness to invoke to their aid in realizing this ambitious dream the arm of secular power. The endless diversity of opinion which the growing liberty and the general ferment of the public mind had occasioned was regarded by them as evidence of the dangers of unlimited toleration, and they imagined that amid such discordant sounds truth must be indistinguishable, and even perish from the earth. Owen's mind had, meanwhile, far advanced beyond these narrow views, and risen above these imaginary fears. He had boundless confidence in the vitality of truth,—strong convictions of the power of its own spiritual weapons, and of the utter impotence of every other: and while so many of those with whom he had hitherto been associated saw only,

in the mingled light and darkness, the approach of night, he hailed in them the hopeful twilight which was to grow into perfect day. In a "Country essay for the practice of church government," prefixed to his sermon before Parliament, he repeatedly condemns all enforced conformity and punishment of heretical opinions by the sword. "Heresy," says he, "is a canker, but it is a spiritual one; let it be prevented by spiritual means: cutting off men's heads is no proper remedy for it."[1] That Owen should have renounced Presbytery, in the intolerant and repulsive form in which it was at this time presented to him, is not to be wondered at; but that he recoiled equally far at every point from all the essential and distinctive principles of that form of church government is a statement which many have found it more difficult to believe. At the same time, no reasonable doubt can be entertained that the government of Owen's church at Coggeshall was decidedly Congregational; and if that church in any degree corresponded with the counsels which Owen addressed to it in his next publication, it must have been pre-eminently one of those to which Baxter alludes in that honourable testimony, "I saw a commendable care of serious holiness and discipline in most of the Independent churches." The publication to which we refer is "Eshcol; or, Rules of Direction for the Walking of the Saints in Fellowship according to the order of the Gospel, 1647." The rules are arranged into two parts,—those which relate to the duty of members to their pastors, and those which specify the duties of members to each other. They are designed to recall men from debates about church order to the serious, humble performance of those duties which grow out of their common fellowship in the gospel. Amid its maxims of holy wisdom it would be impossible to discover whether Owen was a Congregationalist or a Presbyterian.

"Eshcol" was the work of Owen as a pastor; in the following year he was once more to appear as a theologian and Christian polemic, in a work on which he had long been secretly engaged,—"Salus Electorum, Sanguis Iesu; or, the Death of Death in the Death of Christ." The great subject of this treatise is the nature and extent of the death of Christ, with especial reference to the Arminian sentiments on the latter subject. It is dedicated to the Earl of Warwick, the good patron who had introduced Owen to Coggeshall, and warmly recommended by two Presbyterian ministers as "pulling down the rotten house of Arminianism upon the head of those Philistines who would uphold it."[2] Owen himself makes no secret of having devoted to it immense research and protracted meditation. He had given it to the world after a more than seven-years serious inquiry, with a serious perusal of all that the wit of man, in former or latter days,

[1] Owen's Sermons, fol. ed., p. 229.

[2] The names of these ministers are, Stanley Gower and Richard Byfield.

had published in opposition to the truth.[1] It is not without good reason, therefore, that he claims a serious perusal in return: "Reader, if thou art as many in this pretending age, a sign or title gazer, and comest into books as Cato into the theatre, to go out again,—thou hast had thy entertainment: farewell." The characteristic excellencies of Owen's mind shine out in this work with great lustre;—comprehension and elevation of view, which make him look at his subject in its various relations and dependencies, united with the most patiently minute examination of its individual parts,—intellectual strength, that delights to clear its way through impeding sophistries and snares,—soundness of judgment, often manifesting, even in his polemical writings, the presence and power of a heavenly spirit, and "expressing itself in such pithy and pregnant words of wisdom, that you both delight in the reading, and praise God for the writer."[2] Owen does not merely touch his subject, but travels through it with the elephant's grave and solid step, if sometimes also with his ungainly motion; and more than any other writer makes you feel, when he has reached the end of his subject, that he has also exhausted it.

In those parts of the present treatise in which he exhibits the glorious union and co-operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the work of redemption, and represents the death of Christ as part of the divine plan which infallibly secures the bringing of many sons unto glory, he has shown a mastery of argument and a familiarity with the subject-matter of revelation, that leave even the kindred treatise of Witsius far behind. Many modern Calvinists have, indeed, expressed a doubt whether, in thus establishing the truth, he has yet established the whole truth; and whether his masterly treatise would not have more completely exhibited the teaching of Scripture on the relations of the death of Christ, had it shown that, in addition to its more special designs, and in harmony with them, it gave such satisfaction to the divine justice as to lay a broad and ample foundation for the universal calls of the Gospel. It is quite true that the great object of the book is to prove that Christ died for the elect only; and yet there are paragraphs in which Owen, in common with all Calvinists worthy of the name who hold the same view, argues for the true internal perfection and sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, as affording a ground for the indiscriminate invitations of the Gospel, in terms as strong and explicit as the most liberal Calvinist would care to use.[3] This great work was the occasion of much controversy; and it is worthy of especial notice, that it was the first production that turned towards Owen the keen eye of Richard Baxter, and brought the two great Puritans at length to measure arms.[4]

[1] Address to the Reader. [2] Gower's Attestation. [3] Book iv. ch. i. sect. 1.
[4] The controversy was protracted through many treatises, particularly on the

Eventful and anxious years were now passing over the land, in which the long struggle between prerogative and popular right continued to be waged with various success; and at length Owen beheld war brought almost to his door. The friends of Charles, having suddenly risen in Essex, had seized on Colchester, and imprisoned a committee of Parliament that had been sent into Essex to look after their affairs. Lord Fairfax, the leader of the Parliament's forces, had in consequence been sent to recover Colchester and deliver the committee, and for nearly ten weeks maintained a strict siege before its walls. Coggeshall, being not far distant, was chosen as the head quarters of the general; and intercourse having been begun between him and Owen, it became the foundation of a lasting friendship, which, we shall soon find, was not without important fruits. At the close of the ten weeks' siege, of which Owen describes himself as having been an "endangered spectator," he preached two sermons; the one to the army at Colchester on a day of thanksgiving for its surrender, and the other at Rumford to the Parliamentary committee on occasion of their deliverance. These were afterwards published as one discourse on Hab. i. 1–9.[1]

But in the course of a few months, Owen was called to officiate in circumstances unspeakably more critical. Charles I. had been brought to trial before the High Court of Justice, on the charge of being a traitor, tyrant, and murderer; and, in execution of its daring judgment, beheaded before the gates of Whitehall. On the day following this awful transaction, Owen preached by command before Parliament; and the manner in which he discharged this unsought and perilous duty, it has been not unusual to represent as one of the most vulnerable points in his public life. His sermon, which is entitled, "Righteous Zeal Encouraged by Divine Protection," is founded on Jer. xv. 19, 20, "I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee,

side of Baxter, in the appendix to his "Aphorisms on Justification," in his "Confession of Faith," and in his "Five Disputations of Right to the Sacraments;" and, on Owen's part, in a small treatise, "Of the Death of Christ," &c., and in the close of his "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ." Various technical distinctions were introduced in the progress of the discussion,—such as, whether the death of Christ was "solutio ejusdem, or only tantundem." The frequent bandying of these and similar scholastic phrases, in the theological controversies of the age, caught the ear of the author of "Hudibras," and served him at times as matter for ridicule :—

> "The question, then, to state it first,
> Is, Which is better, or which worst,—
> Synod or bears? Bears I avow
> To be the worst, and synods thou;
> But to make good th' assertion,
> Thou say'st th' are really all one.
> If so, not worst; for if th' are *idem*,
> Why then *tantundem dat tantidem*."
>
> Canto iii.

[1] Neal, iii. 407. Asty, p. viii.

saith the Lord,"—a passage which obviously gave him ample opportunity for commenting on recent events. It is remarkable, however, that there is throughout a systematic and careful confining of himself to general statements, the most explicit allusion to the event of which, doubtless, every mind at the moment was full, being in that two-edged sentence, "To those that cry, Give me a king, God can give him in his anger; and from those that cry, Take him away, he can take him away in his wrath;" and the charge founded on this constrained silence, from the days of Owen to our own, is that of selfish and cowardly temporizing. Even one eminent Scottish historian, dazzled, we presume, by the picture of his own Knox, with Bible in hand, addressing Mary, and of other stern presbyters rebuking kings, imagines one of these to have occupied the place of Owen, and with what fearless fidelity he would have addressed those august commoners, "even though every hair of their heads had been a spear pointed at his breast."[1]

But is there not a considerable amount of undue severity in all this? In all likelihood those who had demanded this service of Owen blamed him for an opposite reason, and hoped that this theologian of high renown and untainted reputation would, in the hour of their extremity, have surrounded their daring act with something more than the dubious sanction of his ominous silence. But to ascribe his silence to cowardice, is to assume that he secretly regarded the destruction of Charles as an indefensible act of crime. And was this necessarily Owen's judgment? It was surely possible that, while believing that the party which had brought Charles to the scaffold had violated the letter of the constitution, he may also have believed that it was in righteous punishment of one whose whole career as a monarch had been one long conspiracy against it, and who had aimed, by fourteen years of force and perfidy, to establish despotism upon the ruins of popular liberty. He may have thought that treason was as possible against the constitution as against the crown, and to the full as criminal; and that where a king rejected all government by law, he could no longer be entitled to the shelter of irresponsibility. He may have looked upon the death of Charles as the last resource of a long-tried patience,—the decision of the question, Who shall perish? the one, or the million? We do not say that these were actually Owen's sentiments, but it is well known that they were the thoughts of some of the purest and loftiest minds of that earnest age; and if Owen even hesitated on these points, on which it is well known Milton believed,[2] then silence was demanded, not only by prudence, but

[1] M'Crie's Miscellaneous Works, p 502

[2] Milton's Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, Defence of the People of England.

by honesty, especially in a composition which he himself describes as, "like Jonah's gourd, the production of a night."

Whatever opinion may be formed of Owen's conduct in the matter of the sermon, there are few, we imagine, that will not look on the publication of his "Discourse on Toleration," annexed to the sermon, and presented to the Parliament along with it, as one of the most honourable facts in the public life of this great Puritan. The leading design of this essay is to vindicate the principle, that errors in religion are not punishable by the civil magistrate, with the exception of such as in their own nature, not in some men's apprehensions, disturb the order of society.[1] To assert that this great principle, which is the foundation-stone of religious liberty, was in any sense the discovery of Owen, or of that great party to which he belonged, is to display a strange oblivion of the history of opinions. Even in the writings of some of the earliest Reformers, such as Zwingle, the principle may be found stated and vindicated with all the clearness and force with which Owen has announced it;[2] and Principal Robertson has satisfactorily proved, that the Presbyterian Church of Holland was the first among the churches of the Reformation formally to avow the doctrine, and to embody and defend it in its authoritative documents.[3] Nor is it matter of mere conjecture, that it was on the hospitable shores of Holland, and in the bosom of her church, that English fugitives first learned the true principles of religious liberty, and bore them back as a precious leaven to their own land.[4] It is enough to say of Owen and his party, that in their attachment to these principles they were greatly in advance of their contemporaries; and that the singular praise was theirs, of having been equally zealous for toleration when their party had risen to power, as when they were a weak and persecuted sect. And when we consider the auspicious juncture at which Owen gave forth his sentiments on this momentous subject, his influence over that great religious party of which he was long the chief ornament and ruling spirit, as well as the deference shown to him by the political leaders and patriots of the age, it is not too much to say, that when the names of Jeremy Taylor and Milton, and Vane and Locke are mentioned, that of John Owen must not be forgotten, as one of the most signal of those who helped to fan and quicken, if not to kindle, in England, that flame which, "by God's help, shall never go out;" who, casting abroad their thoughts on the public mind when it was in a state of fusion and impressibility, became its preceptors on the rights of conscience, and have contributed to make the principles of

[1] Owen's Sermons, fol. ed., p. 291
[2] Hess, Life of Zwingle. pp. 148, 159–161. M'Crie's Miscellaneous Works, p. 473.
[3] Robertson's Charles I., iv. 131.
[4] M'Crie's Miscellaneous Works, p. 474.

religious freedom in England familiar, omnipresent, and beneficent, as the light or the air.

On the 19th of April we find Owen once more summoned to preach before Parliament, the chiefs of the army being also present; on which occasion he preached his celebrated sermon, "On the Shaking of Heaven and Earth," Heb. xii. 27. Oliver Cromwell was present, and probably for the first time heard Owen preach. Ere the sermon was completed, Cromwell had formed a resolution which the following day gave him an opportunity of executing. Owen having called at the house of General Fairfax, to pay his respects to him in remembrance of their recent intercourse at Colchester, was informed by the servants that the general was so indisposed that he had already declined to receive the visits of several persons of quality. The pastor of Coggeshall, however, sent in his name; and while waiting, Cromwell and many other officers entered the room. Owen's tall and stately figure soon caught the eye of Cromwell as the person whom he had heard preach with so much delight yesterday; and going up to him, he laid his hands upon his shoulders, and said to him familiarly, "Sir, you are the person I must be acquainted with." Owen modestly replied, "That will be much more to my advantage than yours." To which Cromwell returned, "We shall soon see that;" and taking Owen by the hand, led him into the garden, and made known to him his intention to depart for Ireland, and his wish that Owen should accompany him as chaplain, and also to aid him in investigating and setting in order the affairs of the University of Dublin. To this unexpected proposal Owen naturally objected the claims of his church at Coggeshall; but Cromwell reminding him that he was about to take his younger brother, whom he dearly loved, as standard-bearer in the same army, would not listen to a refusal. He even wrote to the church at Coggeshall urging their consent; and when they showed themselves even more averse to the separation than their pastor, Cromwell rose from entreaties to commands; and Owen, with the advice of certain ministers whom he consulted, was at length induced to make slow preparations for the voyage.[1]

In the interval between these arrangements and his departure for Ireland, we discover Owen once more preaching before the officers of state and the House of Commons, on occasion of the destruction of the Levellers;[2] and about the middle of August we find the army ready to embark for Ireland. On the day before the embarkation it presented one of those characteristic pictures which are almost without a parallel in the history of nations. The entire day was devoted to fasting and prayer;—three ministers in succession, among whom we

[1] Asty, pp. ix. x.

[2] The title of the sermon was, "Human Power Defeated," Ps. lxxvi. 5.

cannot doubt was Owen, solemnly invoked the divine protection and blessing; after which Colonels Gough and Harrison, with Cromwell himself, expounded certain pertinent passages of Scripture. No oath was heard throughout the whole camp, the twelve thousand soldiers spending their leisure hours in reading their Bibles, in the singing of psalms, and in religious conferences. Thus was trained that amazing armament, to whom victory seemed entailed,—whose soldiers combined the courage of the ancient Roman with the virtues of the private citizen, and have been well described as "uniting the most rigid discipline with the fiercest enthusiasm, and moving to victory with the precision of machines, while burning with the wildest fanaticism of crusaders."[1] There were elements at work here that have seldom gone to the composition of armies. "Does the reader look upon it all as madness? Madness lies close by, as madness does to the highest wisdom in man's life always; but this is not mad! This dark element, it is the mother of the lightnings and the splendours; it is very sure this?"[2]

It is no task of ours to follow the course of Cromwell in his rapid and terrible campaign, in which he descended upon Ireland "like the hammer of Thor," and by a few tremendous and almost exterminating strokes, as before the walls of Drogheda, spread universal terror throughout the garrisons of Ireland, saving more blood than if he had adopted a more feeble and hesitating course. His policy in Ireland finds its explanation in two circumstances,—the impression that he had come as the instrument of a just God to avenge the innocent blood of more than a hundred thousand Protestants,—and the conviction that, in repressing a rebellion which threatened the existence of the infant Commonwealth, the "iron hand," though the least amiable, was the most merciful, and would save the necessity of a wider though more prolonged vengeance.[3] But our business is with Owen, whom we find meanwhile employed within the friendly walls of Dublin in preaching to "a numerous multitude of as thirsting people after the gospel as ever he conversed with," investigating the condition of the university, and devising measures for its extension and efficiency. His preaching was "not in vain," while his representations to Parliament led to measures which raised the university from its half-ruinous condition, and obtained for it some of its most valuable immunities.[4] In the course of nine months, Cromwell, whose career in Ireland had been that of the lightning followed by the shower, terrific yet beneficent, returned to England to receive the thanks of the Parliament and the people, and to be appointed General-in-chief of the armies of the Commonwealth; and Owen, mourning over the fact

[1] Whitelock, p. 434. Neal, iv. 4–6. Macaulay's History of England, i. p. 121.
[2] Carlyle's Cromwell, i. p. 341. [3] D'Aubigné's Protector, ch. vi. [4] Orme, p. 88.

"that there was not one gospel preacher for every walled town in Ireland,"[1] was restored to his rejoicing flock at Coggeshall.

But the release which he was to enjoy was short. Cromwell had scarcely returned from Ireland, when the state of Scotland demanded his presence. That nation, which had begun the resistance to the tyranny of the Stuarts, and to the worse tyranny of Rome, had almost unanimously disapproved of the death of Charles, and now looked with jealousy and hostility upon the government of the Commonwealth. They had actually invited Charles from the midst of his debaucheries at Breda to become their king; and, deceived by his signing of the Covenant, were now meditating an attempt to restore him to his father's throne. In all this Cromwell saw, on the part of the best of the Scottish people, an honest and misguided zeal, which was aiming substantially at the same ends as himself; but he saw in it not the less the most imminent danger to the liberty, religion, and morality of England, and hastened to assert and establish in Scotland the authority of the Commonwealth. Simultaneously with this, an order passed the Commons requiring Joseph Caryl and John Owen to attend on the Commander-general as ministers;[2] and Owen was thus a second time torn away from his pastoral plans and studious toils to the society of camps, and the din and carnage of sieges and battle-fields. Cromwell's motives for thus surrounding himself with the great preachers of his age have been variously represented, according to the general theory that has been formed of his character. Believing as we do in his religious sincerity, we cannot doubt that he felt, like other religious men, the powerful attraction of their intercourse. There was sound policy, besides, in seeking by this means to convince an age remarkable for its religious earnestness that he enjoyed the confidence and friendship of the chiefs of the religious world; and hence we find him at a later period securing the presence of John Howe at Whitehall, and aiming by repeated efforts to subdue the jealous penetration of Baxter. This latter motive, we cannot doubt, had its own influence in inducing him to take Caryl and Owen with him to Scotland; and it is very probable, moreover, that, with all his passion for theological polemics, he foresaw that, in his anticipated discussions with the Scottish clergy, he would be all the better of these Puritan chiefs to help him at times in untying the Gordian knots which they were sure to present to him.

We are able to trace but a few of the steps of Owen in Scotland. He appears to have joined Cromwell at Berwick, where he preached

[1] Sermon on the Steadfastness of Promises, and the Sinfulness of Staggering, preached before Parliament after his return from Ireland, on a day of humiliation, Rom. iv. 20.

[2] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 98.

from the text, Isa. lvi. 7, "For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people;" and, as we conclude from a letter of Cromwell's,[1] assisted, with "some other godly ministers," in drawing up a reply to the Declaration of the General Assembly, which had already been sent to Cromwell ere he could cross the borders. We next find him writing from Musselburgh to Lisle, one of the commissioners of the Great Seal, describing a skirmish between some of Cromwell's troops and those of "cautious" Leslie. Next, the battle of Dunbar has been fought. Cromwell is in possession of Edinburgh, but the castle still holds out against him, and the ministers of the city have sought protection within its walls. The pulpits of Edinburgh are consequently in the hands of Cromwell's preachers. Owen preaches repeatedly in old St Giles', and is listened to at first with wonder and jealousy, which gradually melt into kindlier feelings, as the multitude trace in his words a sweet savour of Christ.[2] It is the opinion of many that Owen's hand is visible in the letters which passed between Cromwell and the governor of Edinburgh castle, on the offer of the Lord-General to allow the ministers to come out and occupy their pulpits on the Sabbath-day; when, on their somewhat suspicious and sulky refusal, Cromwell addressed them in that celebrated letter of which Carlyle says, that "the Scotch clergy never got such a reprimand since they first took ordination."[3] Undoubtedly there are striking resemblances to Owen's turn of thought, especially in the paper of "Queries," which abounds in "lumbering sentences with noble meanings." We next follow him with Cromwell to Glasgow, where Zachary Boyd thunders against the Lord-General in the old cathedral, and Cromwell listens with calm forbearance, and where a discussion takes place between Owen and the Scottish ministers, of which the following anecdote is told:—A young Scottish minister, named Hugh Binning, not yet twenty-six years of age, so managed the dispute as to confound Owen and the other English divines. Oliver, surprised and half-pleased, inquired, after the meeting was over, who this bold young man was; and being told that his name was Binning,—"He hath *bound* well, indeed," said he; "but," laying his hand on his sword, "this will loose all again." The discussion, with Binning's victory, is not improbable; but the bad pun and the braggart threat are not like Oliver, and may safely be consigned to those other "anecdotes of Cromwell at Glasgow," of which Carlyle says, that "they are not to be repeated anywhere except in the nursery."[4]

But long ere Cromwell's campaign in Scotland was over, and that last battle, in which he gained "Worcester's laureate wreath," had

[1] Carlyle's Cromwell, ii. 18.
[2] His second sermon, on Isa. lvi. 7, was preached at Edinburgh.
[3] Carlyle's Cromwell, ii. 59. [4] Ibid., ii. 79.

been fought, which drove Charles back to Breda, and reduced Scotland under the generous sway of the Commonwealth, Owen had been permitted to return to his books and to his quiet pastorate in Essex. It was only a short breathing-time, however, before his connection with Coggeshall was loosed for ever. One morning he read, to his surprise, in the newspapers of the day, the following order:—"On the 18th March 1651, the House, taking into consideration the worth and usefulness of John Owen, M.A., of Queen's College, ordered that he be settled in the deanery of Christ Church, in room of Dr Reynolds."[1] A letter soon after followed this from the principal students of Christ Church, expressing their great satisfaction at the appointment. Cromwell before this had been chosen Chancellor of Oxford. And on the 9th of September of the following year, letters from Cromwell nominated Owen vice-chancellor of the university, and thus placed him at the head of that great and ancient seat of learning from which we have seen him, ten years before, walk forth an exile for conscience' sake.[2]

CHAP. III.

HIS VICE-CHANCELLORSHIP.

The office of dean of Christ Church involved in it the duty of presiding at all the meetings of the college, and delivering lectures in divinity; while that of vice-chancellor virtually committed to the hands of Owen the general government of the university. A charge of inconsistency has sometimes been brought against him, as an Independent, for accepting such offices, especially that of dean; and even some sentences of Milton have been adduced to give sanction to the complaint. But the whole charge proceeds on a mistake. It should be remembered that the University of Oxford during the Commonwealth shared in those changes which befell so many other institutions, and had ceased to be a mere appendage and buttress of Episcopacy, and that the office as held by Owen was separated from its ecclesiastical functions, and retained nothing, in fact, of Episcopacy

[1] Asty, p. x.

[2] His preaching before Parliament, about the period of these appointments, appears to have been frequent. On October 24, 1651, being the day of thanksgiving for the victory of Worcester, we find him preaching his sermon entitled, "The Advantage of the Kingdom of Christ in the Shaking of the Kingdoms of the World," Ezek. xvii. 24. Next, February 6, 1652, in the Abbey Church of Westminster, on occasion of the funeral of Henry Ireton, Lord-Deputy of Ireland, and Cromwell's son-in-law, he preached his sermon on Dan. xii. 13,—"The Labouring Saint's Dismission to Rest." Once more, October 13, 1652, on "Christ's Kingdom and the Magistrate's Power," from Dan. vii. 15, 16.

except the name. It is quite true that the emoluments of the deanery were still drawn from the same sources as at an earlier period; but Owen, in common with many of the Independents and all the Presbyterians of his times, was not in principle opposed to the support of the teachers of religion by national funds.[1]

His scruples in accepting office in Oxford, and especially in consenting to be raised to the high position of vice-chancellor, arose from other causes; and it needed all the authority of Cromwell, and all the influence of the senate, completely to overcome them. It required him to do violence to some of his best affections and strongest predilections to tear himself away from the studious days and the happy pastorate of Coggeshall; and perhaps it demanded a higher pitch of resolution still to undertake the government of a university which had been brought to the very brink of ruin by the civil wars, and from which, during the intervening years, it had very partially recovered. During those years of commotion, learning had almost been forgotten for arms; and Oxford, throwing itself with a more than chivalrous loyalty into the cause of Charles, had drained its treasury, and even melted its plate, in order to retrieve his waning fortunes. The consequence had been, that at the end of the civil war, when the cause of the Parliament triumphed, many of its halls and colleges were closed; others of them had been converted into magazines for stores and barracks for soldiers; the studious habits of its youth had been completely disturbed, and the university burdened with a debt of almost hopeless magnitude. Some of the worst of these evils still remained,—others of them were only partially diminished; and when we add to this the spirit of destructive Vandalism with which a noisy party began to regard those ancient seats of learning, the licentiousness and insubordination which the students had borrowed from the armies of the Royalists, as well as the jealousy with which Owen was regarded by the secret friends of Episcopacy, and by Presbyterians who had been displaced by Cromwell from high positions in order to give place to Independents, it is easy to see that it required no common courage to seize the helm at such a moment, to grapple with such varied and formidable difficulties, and to reduce such discordant elements to peace.[2] Such was the work to which Owen now betook himself.

It is only too evident that even at the present day it requires, in the case of many, something like a mental effort against early prejudice, to conceive of this Puritan pastor occupying the lofty eminence to which he was now raised with a suitable amount of dignity and grace. Not only

[1] Discourse of Toleration, Owen's Sermons, fol. ed. p. 308.

[2] Neal, iii. 360, 361. Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy, pp. 122, 123, 128. Owen's Oratio quinta ad Academicos, anno 1657. "Per primum biennium vulgi fuimus et vulgaris fabula."

the author of "Hudibras," but even Clarendon and Hume, have written of the Puritans in the style of caricature, and cleverly confounding them under a common name with ignorant and extravagant sectaries whom the Puritans all along condemned and disowned, have too long succeeded in representing the popular type of the Puritan as that of men of affected sanctity, pedantic and piebald dialect, sour temper, and unpolished manner. Those who indulge these ignorant mistakes forget that if the Puritan preachers were thus utterly deficient in matters of taste and refinement, they had received their training at Oxford and Cambridge, and that the reflection must, therefore, in all fairness, be extended to those seminaries. They forget, moreover, as has been well remarked, that "it is more reasonable, and certainly much more generous, to form our judgment with regard to religious parties from the men among them who make their bequests to posterity, than from such as constitute the weakness of a body rather than its strength, and who die, as a matter of course, in the obscurity in which they have lived."[1]

But it is remarkable, that all the leading men among the Puritan clergy were such as, even in the matter of external grace and polish, might have stood before kings. The native majesty of John Howe, refined by intercourse with families of noble birth, and his radiant countenance, as if formed *meliore luto*, linger even in his portraits. Philip Henry, the playmate of princes, bore with him into his country parish that "unbought grace of life," which, in spite of his sterner qualities, attracted towards him the most polished families of his neighbourhood. Richard Baxter was the chosen associate of Sir Matthew Hale; and, contrary even to the popular notions of those whose sympathies are all on the side of Puritanism, Owen bore with him into public life none of the uncouth and lumbering pedantry of the recluse, but associated with his more solid qualities all the lighter graces of courtesy and taste. He is described by one contemporary as "of universal affability, ready presence and discourse, liberal, graceful, and courteous demeanour, that speak him certainly (whatsoever he be else) one that was more a gentleman than most of the clergy."[2] And Dodwell says, "His personage was proper and comely, and he had a very graceful behaviour in the pulpit, an eloquent elocution, a winning and insinuating deportment, and could, by the persuasion of his oratory, in conjunction with some other outward advantages, move and wind the affections of his auditory almost as he pleased."[3] It is with such a manner that we can conceive him to have

[1] Vaughan's Modern Pulpit, p. 87.

[2] "Authority of the Magistrate in Religion Discussed," &c., by J. H.; whom Anthony Wood (Athen. Oxon., iv. 101) supposes to be John Humphrey.

[3] Wood's Athen. Oxon., ibid.—We subjoin Wood's own caricature: "While he [Owen] did undergo the same office, he, instead of being a grave example to the university, scorned all formality, undervalued his office by going in quirpo like a

addressed the assembled heads of colleges, when he assumed the helm at Oxford with tremulous hand, yet with firm determination to do his utmost to discharge his high stewardship.

"I am well aware," said he, "gentlemen of the university, of the grief you must feel that, after so many venerable names, reverend persons, depositaries and preceptors of the arts and sciences, the fates of the university should have at last placed him as leader of the company who almost closes the rear. Neither, indeed, is this state of our affairs, of whatever kind it be, very agreeable to myself, since I am compelled to regard my return, after a long absence, to my beloved mother as a prelude to the duties of a laborious and difficult situation. But complaints are not remedies of any misfortune. Whatever their misfortune, groans become not grave and honourable men. It is the part of an undaunted mind boldly to bear up under a heavy burden. For, as the comic poet says,—

> "'The life of man
> Is like a game at tables. If the cast
> Which is most necessary be not thrown,
> That which chance sends, you must correct by art.'[1]

"The academic vessel, too long, alas! tossed by storms, being almost entirely abandoned by all whose more advanced age, longer experience, and well-earned literary titles, excited great and just expectations, I have been called upon, by the partiality and too good opinion of him whose commands we must not gainsay, and with whom the most earnest entreaties to be excused were urged in vain, and also by the consenting suffrage of this senate; and, therefore, although there is perhaps no one more unfit, I approach the helm. In what times, what manners, what diversities of opinion (dissensions and calumnies everywhere raging in consequence of party spirit), what bitter passions and provocations, what pride and malice, our academical authority has occurred, I both know and lament. Nor is it only the character of the age that distracts us, but another calamity to our literary establishment, which is daily becoming more conspicuous, —the contempt, namely, of the sacred authority of law, and of the reverence due to our ancestors; the watchful envy of Malignants; the despised tears and sobs of our almost dying mother, the university (with the eternal loss of the class of gownsmen, and the no small hazard of the whole institution); and the detestable audacity and licentiousness, manifestly Epicurean beyond all the bounds of modesty and piety, in which, alas! too many of the students indulge. Am

young scholar, with powdered hair, snakebone bandstrings (or bandstrings with very large tassels), lawn bands, a very large set of ribbons pointed at his knees, and Spanish leather boots with large lawn tops, and his hat mostly cock'd."—Ibid. 98.

[1] Terence, Adelph. iv. 7, 21.

I, then, able, in this tottering state of all things, to apply a remedy to this complication of difficulties, in which so many and so great heroes have, in the most favourable times, laboured in vain? I am not, gentlemen, so self-sufficient. Were I to act the part of one so impertinently disposed to flatter himself, nay, were the slightest thought of such a nature to enter my mind, I should be quite displeased with myself. I live not so far from home, nor am such a stranger to myself, I use not my eyes so much in the manner of witches, as not to know well how scantily I am furnished with learning, prudence, authority, and wisdom. Antiquity hath celebrated Lucullus as a prodigy in nature, who, though unacquainted with even the duty of a common soldier, became without any difficulty an expert general; so that the man whom the city sent out inexperienced in fighting, him the army received a complete master of the art of war. Be of good courage, gentlemen. I bring no prodigies; from the obscurity of a rural situation, from the din of arms, from journeys for the sake of the gospel into the most distant parts of the island, and also beyond sea, from the bustle of the court, I have retreated unskilful in the government of the university; unskilful, also, I am come hither.

"'What madness is this, then?' you will say. 'Why have you undertaken that which you are unable to execute, far less to adorn? You have judged very ill for yourself, for the university, and for this venerable senate.' Softly, my hearers; neither hope nor courage wholly fails one who is swayed by the judgment, the wishes, the commands, the entreaties of the highest characters. We are not ourselves the sources of worthy deeds of any kind. 'He who ministereth seed to the sower,' and who from the mouths of infants hath ordained strength, is able graciously to supply all defects, whether caused from without or felt within. Destitute, therefore, of any strength and boldness of my own, and of any adventitious aid through influence with the university, so far as I know or have deserved, it nevertheless remains to me to commit myself wholly to Him 'who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.' He hath appointed an eternal fountain of supply in Christ, who furnisheth seasonable help to every pious endeavour, unless our littleness of faith stand in the way; thence must I wait and pray for light, for strength, and for courage. Trusting, therefore, in his graciously promised presence, according to the state of the times, and the opportunity which, through divine Providence, we have obtained,—conscious integrity alone supplying the place of arts and of all embellishments,—without either a depressed or servile spirit, I address myself to this undertaking."[1]

The facts that have been preserved by Owen's biographers suffi-

[1] Oratio prima, translated by Orme, pp. 128–131.

ciently prove that this inaugural address was no mere language of dignified ceremony. By infusing that tolerant spirit into his administration which he had often commended in his days of suffering, but which so many in those times forgot when they rose to power,—by a generous impartiality in the bestowal of patronage,—by an eagerness to detect modest merit, and to help struggling poverty,—by a firm repression of disorder and licentiousness, and a steadfast encouragement of studious habits and good conduct,—he succeeded, during the few years of his vice-chancellorship, in curing the worst evils of the university, and restoring it to such a condition of prosperity as to command at length even the reluctant praise of Clarendon.

Among other honourable facts, it is recorded that he allowed a society of Episcopalians to meet every Lord's day over against his own door,[1] and to celebrate public worship according to the forms of the liturgy, though the laws at that period put it in Owen's power to disperse the assembly; and there were not wanting those of a less enlarged and unsectarian spirit to urge him to such a course. In the same wise and conciliatory spirit he won the confidence of the Presbyterians, by bestowing upon their ablest men some of the vacant livings that were at his disposal, and taking counsel of them in all difficulties and emergencies. Many a poor and promising student was aided by him with sums of money, and with that well-timed encouragement which is more gratifying than silver and gold, and which, in more than one instance, was found to have given the first impulse on the road to fame. Foreign students of hopeful ability were admitted through his influence to the use of the libraries and to free commons; and one poor youth, in whose Latin epistle, informing Owen of his necessities, he had discovered an unusual "sharpness of wit," was at once received by him as tutor into his own family.[2]

But, amid these generous and conciliatory measures, Owen knew how, by acts of wholesome severity, to put a curb upon licentiousness, and to invigorate the whole discipline of the university. At a public Act, when one of the students of Trinity College was *Terræ filius*, he stood up before the student began, and told him in Latin that he was at liberty to say what he pleased, on condition that he abstained from all profane and obscene expressions and personal reflections. The student began, but soon violated all the conditions that had been laid down to him. Owen repeatedly warned him to desist from a course so dishonouring to the university; but the youth obstinately persisting in the same strain, he at length commanded the beadles to pull him down. This was a signal for the students to interpose; on

[1] "At the house of Dr Willis the physician, not far from his own lodgings at Christchurch."—Biograph. Dict., x. 103.

[2] Asty, pp. xi., xii. Calamy's Noncon. Mem., i. 201. Wood's Fasti, ii. 788.

which Owen, determined that the authority of the university should not be insolently trampled on, rose from his seat, in the face of the remonstrances of his friends, who were concerned for his personal safety, drew the offender from his place with his own hand, and committed him to Bocardo, the prison of the university,—the students meanwhile standing aloof with amazement and fear at his resolution.[1] Was there not something, in this scene, of that robust physical energy which had distinguished Owen at Oxford in earlier days in bell-ringing and the leaping of bars?

But the aims of the vice-chancellor rose far above the mere attempt to restrain licentiousness within moderate bounds;—his whole arrangements were made with the anxious desire of awakening and fostering among the students the power of a living piety. His own example, as well as the pervading spirit of his administration, would contribute much to this; and there are not wanting individual facts to show with what earnestness he watched and laboured for the religious wellbeing of the university. It had been customary for the Fellows to preach by turns on the afternoon of the Lord's day in St Mary's Church; but, on its being found that the highest ends of preaching were often more injured than advanced by this means, he determined to undertake this service alternately with Dr Goodwin, the head of Magdalen College, and in this way to secure to the youth of Oxford the advantage of a sound and serious ministry. It is interesting to open, nearly two hundred years afterwards, the reminiscences of one of the students, and to read his strong and grateful testimony to the benefits he had derived from these arrangements of the Puritan vice-chancellor. We have this privilege in the "Memoir of Philip Henry, by his son." "He would often mention, with thankfulness to God," says the quaint and pious biographer, "what great helps and advantages he had then in the university,—not only for learning, but for religion and piety. Serious godliness was in reputation; and, besides the public opportunities they had, many of the scholars used to meet together for prayer and Christian conference, to the great confirming of one another's hearts in the fear and love of God, and the preparing of them for the service of the church in their generation. I have heard him speak of the prudent method they took then about the university sermons on the Lord's day, in the afternoon, which used to be preached by the fellows of colleges in their course; but that being found not so much for edification, Dr Owen and Dr Goodwin performed that service alternately, and the young masters that were wont to preach it had a lecture on Tuesday appointed them."[2]

But the combined duties of his two onerous offices at Oxford did

[1] Asty, pp. xi. xii. [2] Life and Times of Philip Henry, p. 60.

not absorb all the energies of Owen. His mind appears to have expanded with his position, and to have shown resources that were literally inexhaustible. The few years which saw him the chief agent in raising the university from the brink of ruin, were those in which he was most frequently summoned by Cromwell to his councils, and in which he gave to the world theological works which would have been sufficient of themselves, in the case of most men, to occupy and to recompense the energies of a lifetime. We now turn with him, then, for a little to the platform of public life, and to the toils of authorship.

On the 25th of August 1653 we again find him preaching, by command, before Parliament, on occasion of that celebrated victory over the Dutch fleet which established the reputation of the arms of the Commonwealth by sea, and paved the way for an honourable and advantageous peace with Holland. In October of the same year he was invited by Cromwell to London, to take part, along with some other ministers, in a conference on Christian union. The matter is stated in such interesting terms in one of the newspapers of the day, and, besides, affords such a valuable incidental glimpse of Cromwell's administration, that we prefer giving it in the words of that document:—"Several ministers were treated with by his Excellency the Lord-General Cromwell, to persuade them that hold Christ, the head, and so are the same in fundamentals, to agree in love,—that there be no such divisions among people professing godliness as hath been, nor railing or reviling each other for difference only in forms. There were Mr Owen, Mr Marshall (Presbyterian), Mr Nye (Independent), Mr Jessey (Baptist), Mr Harrison, and others; to whom the advice and counsel of his Excellency were so sweet and precious, and managed with such judgment and graciousness, that it is hoped it will much tend to persuade those that fear the Lord in spirit and truth to labour for the union of all God's people."[1]

It does not appear that any immediate practical measures resulted from this conference. The mistake, by which many such laudable attempts were defeated, was that of attempting too much. Incorporation was sought, when they should have been satisfied with mutual Christian recognition and co-operation up to the point of agreement; and sometimes a constrained silence on matters of difference, where there should rather have been a generous forbearance. But it is wrong to speak of such conferences and communings, when they failed of their immediate object, as either useless or fruitless. To the good men who mingled in them, it must have deepened the feeling of unity even where it did not increase its manifestation, and even unconsciously to themselves must have lowered the walls of division. Nor is it without interest and instruction to remark, that the best men of

[1] Cromwelliana, Orme, p. 109.

that age and of the next were ever the readiest to give themselves to movements that had this aim. Owen, by the reproaches which he brought upon himself on this account from weaker brethren, showed himself to be before his age. The pure spirit of Howe, which dwelt in a region so far above the petty passions of earth, has expressed its longings to see the church made "more awful and more amiable" by union, in his essay "On Union among Protestants," and "On the Carnality of Religious Contentions." Baxter, with all his passion for dialectics, felt and owned the power of these holy attractions, and longed the more for the everlasting rest, that he would there at length see the perfect realization of union.[1] And the saintly Usher, prompted in part by the sublime reasonings of Howe, actually proposed a scheme of comprehension, of which, though defective in some of its provisions, and not permitted to be realized, God doubtless said, "It was good that it was in thine heart to do it." The Puritans did more than make unsuccessful experiments of union: they expounded in their writings many of the principles on which alone it can be accomplished; and it seems now only to need a revival of religion from on high in order to accomplish what they so eagerly desired. They were the Davids who prepared the materials of the temple,—shall the Christians of this age be the sons of peace who shall be honoured to build?

It was in all likelihood while Owen was attending in London on the meetings of this conference, that the senate embraced the opportunity of diplomating him Doctor of Divinity. For we find it recorded by Wood in his "Fasti Oxoniensis," that, "On Dec. 23, John Owen, M.A., dean of Ch. Ch., and vice-chancellor of the university, was then (he being at Lond.) diplomated doct. of div." He is said in his diploma to be "in palæstra theologica exercitatissimus, in concionando assiduus et potens, in disputando strenuus et acutus."[2] Owen's friend, Thomas Goodwin, president of Magdalen College, was diplomated on the same occasion; and the honoured associates are sneeringly described by Wood, after his manner, as "the two Atlases and patriarchs of Independency."[3]

In the midst of these engagements, Dr Owen produced and published, in Latin, one of his most abstruse dissertations,—"Diatriba de Divina Justitia, etc.; or, the Claims of Vindicatory Justice Asserted." The principle which it is the design of this treatise to explain and establish is, that God, considered as a moral governor, could not forgive sin without an atonement, or such provision for his justice as that which is made by the sacrifice of Christ. It had fallen to his lot

[1] His spirit is expressed in the following tender words, with which he closed one of his debates: "While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying, and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies; and the safest passage thither is by a peaceable holiness."

[2] Wood's Fasti, ii. 179. [3] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 98.

some months before, in certain theological discussions to which he was called by his office, "to discourse and dispute on the vindicatory justice of God, and the necessity of its exercise on the supposition of the existence of sin;" and his hurried treatment of the subject, in the brief hour which was allowed him, had the rare success of bringing many over to his views. Owen was convinced that his principle "struck its roots deep through almost the whole of theology."[1] He saw plainly that its effect, if established, was to raze the very foundations of Socinian error;—yet he was grieved to find that many excellent divines, who held views in common with him on all the great truths of the evangelical system, wavered on this, and that some honoured names had lately given a new sanction to the opposite opinion; among whom were Dr Twisse of Newbury, prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, in his "Vindiciæ Gratiæ, Potestatis, ac Providentiæ divinæ," and the venerable Samuel Rutherford of St Andrews, in his "Disputatio Scholastica de divina Providentia."[2] This made him the more readily accede to the wishes of those who had received benefit and confirmation from his verbal exposition of the subject, that he would enter on its more orderly and deliberate investigation. We do not wonder that the future expositor of the Epistle to the Hebrews should have been strongly prompted to contend for this principle, since it seems wrought up with more than one part of that colossal argument of inspired theology.

In pursuing his argument, he evidently felt himself dazzled at times by the lustre of those interior truths to which his thoughts were turned. "Those points," he remarks, "which dwell in more intimate recesses, and approach nearer its immense fountain, the Father of light, darting brighter rays by their excess of light, present a confounding darkness to the minds of the greatest men, and are as darkness to the eyes breaking forth amidst so great light. For what we call darkness in divine subjects is nothing else than their celestial glory and splendour striking on the weak ball of our eyes, the rays of which we are not able in this life, which is but a vapour and shineth but a little, to bear."[3]

In other places we can trace indications, that when he was rising

[1] Preface, p. viii. [2] Orme, p. 153.

[3] Many readers will be struck by the resemblance between this noble passage and that of Owen's greatest contemporary :—

"Thee, Author of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sittest
Throned inaccessible; but when thou shadest
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud,
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear;
Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes."

Par. Lost., book iii. 374–382.

to the height of his great argument, his fertile mind was revolving new treatises, which he afterwards gave to the world, and longing for the hour when he would descend from his present altitudes to those truths which bear more directly and powerfully on the spiritual life: "There are, no doubt, many other portions and subjects of our religion, of that blessed trust committed to us for our instruction, on which we might dwell with greater pleasure and satisfaction of mind. Such, I mean, as afford a more free and wider scope of ranging through the most pleasant meads of the holy Scripture, and contemplating in these the transparent fountains of life and rivers of consolation;—subjects which, unencumbered by the thickets of scholastic terms and distinctions, unembarrassed by the impediments and sophisms of an enslaving philosophy or false knowledge, sweetly and pleasantly lead into a pure, unmixed, and delightful fellowship with the Father and with his Son, shedding abroad in the heart the inmost loves of our Beloved, with the odour of his sweet ointment poured forth."[1]

The usual number of replies followed the appearance of this treatise, in which Baxter once more stood forth equipped in his ready armour.

In the following year Dr Owen gave to the world another work, of much greater magnitude, extending over nearly five hundred folio pages. He has himself supplied its best description and analysis in its ample title-page,—"The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance Explained and Confirmed; or, the certain permanency of their acceptation with God and sanctification from God manifested and proved, from the eternal principles, the effectual causes, and the external means thereof; in the immutability of the nature, decrees, covenant, and promises of God; the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ; the promises, exhortations, and threats of the Gospel: improved in its genuine tendency to obedience and consolation." The work was immediately called forth by the "Redemption Redeemed" of John Goodwin, an Arminian writer, to whom Owen allows nearly all the most brilliant qualities of a controversialist, except a good cause. He describes him as not only clothing every conception of his mind with language of a full and choice significancy, but also trimming and adorning it with all manner of signal improvements that may render it keen or pleasant, according to his intendment and desire, and happily applies to him the words of the Roman poet:—

> "Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
> Quem super notas aluêre ripas,
> Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo
> Pindarus ore."

[1] Preface, p. xx.

The treatise, however, would be almost as complete were every part of it that refers to Goodwin expunged, and undeniably forms the most masterly vindication of the perseverance of the saints in the English tongue. Even Goodwin, with all his luxuriant eloquence, is sadly shattered when grasped by the mailed hand of the great Puritan.

> "Luxuriant artus, effusaque sanguine laxo
> Membra natant."

The style of argument is much more popular than that of the former treatise; partly because of the insinuating rhetoric of his adversary, and also because Owen knew that Arminian sentiments had found their way into many of the churches, and that if he was to convince the people, he must write for the people. The following weighty sentence refers to his avoidance of philosophical terms and scholastic forms of argument, and is worthy of Owen's sanctified wisdom: "That which we account our wisdom and learning may, if too rigorously attended, be our folly: when we think to sharpen the reason of the Scripture, we may straiten the efficacy of the spirit of it. It is oftentimes more effectual in its own liberty, than when restrained to our methods of arguing; and the weapons of it keener in their own soft breathings, than when sharpened in the forge of Aristotle."[1]

No part of this elaborate work is more characteristic of Dr Owen than his preface to the reader, which extends over forty folio pages, until you begin to fear that "the gate shall become wider than the city." It contains an account of the treatment which the doctrine had received from the first Christian century to his own; and in its pages, which are literally variegated with Greek and Latin citations, displays an immense research. But what most surprises the reader, is to find the Doctor, when about the middle of his way, deliberately turning aside to discuss with Dr Hammond the genuineness of the Epistles of Ignatius, and to weigh the evidence which they would afford, on the supposition of their genuineness, for a primitive Episcopacy. One is tempted to trace a resemblance between the theological writing of those times and their modes of journeying. There was no moving in those days with all possible directness and celerity to the goal. The traveller stopped when he pleased, diverged where he pleased, and as often as he pleased, whenever he wished to salute a friend or to settle a controversy.—The work is dedicated to Cromwell. The strong language in which Owen speaks of his religious sincerity is interesting, as showing the estimate which was formed of the Protector's character by those who had the best opportunities of judging regarding it.[2]

[1] Epistle Dedicatory to the Heads of Colleges, etc., at Oxford, p. 8.

[2] "In the midst of all the changes and mutations which the infinitely wise providence of God doth daily effect in the greater and lesser things of this world, as

The mention of Cromwell's name naturally brings us back to public events, and to an occurrence which, more than almost any other in Owen's life, laid him open to the reproaches of his enemies. Cromwell having dissolved the Long Parliament in the end of 1653, had a few months after issued writs for a new election. The university of Oxford was empowered to return one member to this Parliament, and Dr Owen was elected. That he did not evince any decided unwillingness to accept this new office may be presumed from the fact that he at once took his seat in the House, and continued to sit until the committee of privileges, on account of his being a minister of religion, declared his election annulled. His systematic detractors have fastened on this part of his conduct with all the instinct of vultures, and even his friends have only ventured, for the most part, on a timid and hesitating defence. Cawdrey and Anthony Wood, not satisfied with commenting on the fact of his seeming eagerness to grasp at civil power, accuse him, on the authority of public rumour, of refusing to say whether he was a minister or not,—a charge which he left at first to be answered by its own absurdity, but which, on finding some actually crediting it, he repelled with a pardonable amount of vehement indignation, declaring it to be "so remote from any thing to give a pretence or colour to it, that I question whether Satan have impudence enough to own himself its author."[1]

But there have been others, who, while disowning all sympathy with these birds of evil omen that haunted the path of the noble Puritan, have questioned the propriety and consistency of one in Owen's circumstances, and with all his strongly-professed longings for the duties of a tranquil pastorate, so readily "entangling himself with the affairs of this life;" and this is certainly a more tenable ground of objection. And yet, to judge Owen rightly, we must take into view all the special elements of the case. All except those who see in ordination a mysterious and indissoluble spell, and hold the Romish figment of "once a priest, always a priest," will admit that emergencies may arise in a commonwealth when even the Christian minister may, for the sake of accomplishing the highest amount of good, place in abeyance the peculiar duties of his office, and merge the pastor in the legislator. Persons had sat with this conviction in the immediately previous Parliament; and in the last century, Dr Witherspoon, one of the

to the communication of his love in Jesus Christ, and the merciful, gracious distribution of the unsearchable riches of his grace, and the hid treasures thereof purchased by his blood, he knows no repentance. Of both these you have had full experience. And though your concernment in the former hath been as eminent as that of any person whatever in these later ages of the world, yet your interest in and acquaintance with the latter is, as of incomparably more importance in itself, so answerably of more value and esteem unto you."—Dedication to His Highness, Oliver, Lord Protector.

[1] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 99. Pref. to Cotton's Defence, Orme, p 112.

purest and most conscientious of Scottish ecclesiastics, after emigrating to America, united the duties of pastor and president of Jersey College with those of a member of Congress, and was only second to Washington and Franklin in laying the foundations of the infant republic.[1] Dr Owen, in all likelihood, acted on principles similar to those which swayed the Scottish divine; and when we consider the avowed and fanatical animosity with which Oxford was regarded by a turbulent party in the state, as well as the active interest which Cromwell and his Parliaments took in the religious condition of the nation, it is easy to conceive how Owen felt that he was only placing himself in a better position for watching over the wellbeing of the university, and for promoting the interests of religion and of religious liberty, by being there to bear his part in the deliberations regarding it. At the same time, with all these facts before us to qualify our censure, we cannot help thinking that when Owen saw the validity of his election so vehemently questioned, he would have consulted his dignity more had he declined to sit.

In the "Instrument of Government" presented by Cromwell to this Parliament, it was proposed that all who professed faith in God by Jesus Christ should be protected in their religion. In the debates which took place on this part of the instrument, its language was interpreted as recommending toleration to those only who were agreed on the fundamentals of Christian doctrine,—an interpretation which, there is reason to think, injuriously restricted the Protector's meaning. But the question immediately arose, what were fundamentals? and a committee of fourteen was appointed to prepare a statement for the House on this subject; who, in their turn, committed the work to fourteen divines of eminence. Owen was on this committee; and, according to Baxter, had the principal share in "wording the articles." He has been blamed for seeking to limit the blessings of toleration, on the now generally-admitted principle, that a man's religious belief ought not to be made the condition of his civil privileges. But the censure is misplaced. Owen was responsible for the correctness of his answers,—not for the use which the Parliament might make of them; but the abrupt dissolution of the Parliament which, disappointed Cromwell's expectations, prevented their being embodied in any legislative measure.[2]

About the same period Dr Owen was invited by the Protector and his Council to form part of a committee, from whose labours the cause of religion in England reaped great and permanent advantage. We refer to the commission appointed to examine candidates for ordination; whose powers soon after included the ejection of ministers

[1] Life of Dr Witherspoon, prefixed to works, pp. xix.-xxiii.
[2] Baxter's own Life, p. 205. Neal, iv. 88-91.

and schoolmasters of heretical doctrine and scandalous life. Cromwell has been condemned for thus invading the proper functions of the church; and undoubtedly he did in this measure boldly overstep the province of the legislator; at the same time, he was right in thinking that the true greatness of his kingdom, and the stability of his government, depended on the pervading influence of religion among the people; and that it was better that the church should in this irregular manner be purged of its hirelings and money-changers, than left to sink into inefficiency and corruption.

About forty ministers, "the acknowledged flower of Puritanism," were united with a few Puritan laymen, and appointed to this most delicate office. Undoubtedly, the power committed to them was tremendous, and, in the hands of unscrupulous men, might have been turned to purposes the most inquisitorial and vile. But seldom has power been less abused, or the rare and incidental mischiefs arising from its exercise, more immeasurably outweighed by its substantial benefits. It afforded, indeed, a tempting theme for the profane genius of Hudibras, to represent the triers, in their inquiries regarding the spiritual life of candidates, as endeavouring—

> "To find, in lines of beard and face,
> The physiognomy of grace;
> And, by the sound of twang and nose,
> If all be sound within disclose;"

and high Royalists and partisans like Bishop Kennet, who had probably smarted under their investigations, in their eagerness to find matter of accusation against them, might blunder out unconscious praise. But the strong assertion of the historian of the Puritans has never been disproved,—that not a single instance can be produced of any who were rejected for insufficiency without being first convicted either of immorality, of obnoxious sentiments in the Socinian or Pelagian controversy, or of disaffection to the present government. Cromwell could, before his second Parliament, refer to the labours of the commissioners in such strong terms as these: "There hath not been such a service to England since the Christian religion was perfect in England! I dare be bold to say it." And the well-balanced testimony of Baxter, given with all his quaint felicity, may be held, when we consider that he had looked on the appointment of the triers with no friendly eye, as introducing all the shadings necessary to truth: "Because this assembly of triers is most heavily accused and reproached by some men, I shall speak the truth of them; and suppose my word will be taken, because most of them took me for one of their boldest adversaries. The truth is, though some few over-rigid and over-busy Independents among them were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in inquiring after evidences of sanctifica-

tion in those whom they examined, and somewhat too lax in admitting of unlearned and erroneous men that favoured Antinomianism or Anabaptism; yet, to give them their due, they did abundance of good in the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers,—that sort of men who intend no more in the ministry than to read a sermon on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go with the people to the ale-house and harden them in sin; and that sort of ministers who either preached against a holy life, or preached as men who were never acquainted with it. These they usually rejected, and in their stead admitted of any that were able, serious preachers, and lived a godly life, of what tolerable opinion soever they were; so that, though many of them were a little partial for the Independents, Separatists, Fifth-monarchy Men, and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, yet so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the church, that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterwards cast them out again."[1]

Every student of the Puritan history is familiar with the magnanimous act of Howe, in recommending Fuller the historian for ordination, though a Royalist, because he "made conscience of his thoughts;"[2] and an equally high-minded and generous act of impartiality is recorded of Owen. Dr Pocock, professor of Arabic in Oxford, and one of the greatest scholars in Europe, held a living in Berks, and was about to have hard measure dealt to him by the commissioners for that county. No sooner did Owen hear of this than he wrote to Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, imploring him to stay such rash and disgraceful procedure. Not satisfied with this, he hastened into Berkshire in person, warmly remonstrated with the commissioners on the course which they seemed bent on pursuing, and only ceased when he had obtained the honourable discharge of the menaced scholar from farther attendance.[3]

Owen's wisdom in council involved the natural penalty of frequent consultation; and, accordingly, we find him in the following year again invited to confer with Cromwell on a subject which, in addition to its own intrinsic interest, acquires a new interest from recent agitation. Manasseh Ben Israel, a learned Jew from Amsterdam, had asked of Cromwell and his government permission for the Jews to settle and trade in England, from which they had been excluded since the thirteenth century. Cromwell, favourable to the proposal him-

[1] Neal, iv. 92–97. Baxter's own Life, part i. p. 72. Orme, pp. 116–119. Vaughan's Stuart Dynasty, pp. 247–250. D'Aubigné's Protectorate, pp. 231–236.
[2] Calamy's Life of Howe, prefixed to works, p. v. Neal, iv. 97.
[3] Biog. Dict., x. 103. Orme, p. 118.

self, submitted the question to a conference of lawyers, merchants, and divines, whom he assembled, and whom he wished to consider it in relation to the interests which they might be held respectively to represent. The lawyers saw nothing in the admission of the Jews contrary to the laws of England; some of the merchants were friendly, and some opposed; and though a living historian has described the theologians as unanimous in their opposition, they were, in fact, divided in their opinion too; some, like Mr Dury, being fierce in their opposition, even to fanaticism; and others, of whom there is reason to think Dr Owen was one, being prepared to admit them under certain restrictions. Cromwell, however, was on this subject in advance of all his counsellors, and indeed of his age, "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people," and displayed a faith in the power of truth, and an ingenuity in turning the timid objections of his advisers into arguments by which they might at once have been instructed and rebuked. "Since there is a promise in holy Scripture of the conversion of the Jews," he said, "I do not know but the preaching of the gospel, as it is now in England, without idolatry or superstition, may conduce to it." "I never heard a man speak so well," was the future testimony of Sir Paul Ricaut, who had pressed into the crowd. The good intentions of the Protector were defeated; but, as an expression of his respect for the rabbi, he ordered £200 to be paid to him out of the public treasury.[1]

In the midst of these public events, Owen's pen had once more been turned to authorship by the immediate command of the Council of State. The catechisms of Biddle, the father of English Socinianism, had given vogue to the errors of that school; and though various writers of ability, such as Poole and Cheynel in England, and Cloppenburg, Arnold, and Maretz on the Continent, had already remarked on them, it was deemed advisable that they should obtain a more complete and sifting exposure; and Owen was selected, by the high authority we have named, to undertake the task. His "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ," a work of seven hundred quarto pages, embracing all the great points of controversy between the Socinian and the Calvinist, was the fruit of this command; and was certainly a far more suitable and efficient way of extinguishing the poor heresiarch, than the repeated imprisonments to which he was subjected. Dr Owen, however, does not confine himself to the writings of Biddle, but includes in his review the Racovian Catechism, which was the confession of the foreign Socinians of that age; and the Annotations of Grotius,—which, though nowhere directly teaching Socinian opinions, are justly charged by him with explaining away those passages on which the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel lean for their support, and thus, by extinguishing one

[1] Whitelock's Memorials, p. 673. Neal, iv. 126–128.

light after another, leaving you at length in midnight darkness. An accomplished modern writer has pointed out a mortifying identity between the dogmas of our modern Pantheists and those of the Bhuddists of India.[1] It would be easy to show that the discoveries of our modern Neologists and Rationalists are in truth the resurrection of the errors of Biddle, Smalcius, and Moscorovius.[2] Again and again, in those writings, which have slumbered beneath the dust of two centuries, the student meets with the same speculations, supported by the same reasonings and interpretations, that have startled him in the modern German treatise, by their impious hardihood.

You pass into the body of this elaborate work through one of those learned porticoes in which our author delights, and in which the history of Socinianism is traced through its many forms and phases, from the days of Simon Magus to his own. No part of this history is of more permanent value than his remarks on the controversial tactics of Socinians; among which he especially notices their objection to the use of terms not to be found in Scripture; and to which he replies, that "though such terms may not be of absolute necessity to express the things themselves to the minds of believers, they may yet be necessary to defend the truth from the opposition and craft of seducers;" —their cavilling against evangelical doctrines rather than stating any positive opinions of their own, and, when finding it inconvenient to oppose, or impossible to refute a doctrine, insisting on its not being fundamental. How much of the secret of error in religion is detected in the following advice: "Take heed of the snare of Satan in affecting eminency by singularity. It is good to strive to excel, and to go before one another in knowledge and in light, as in holiness and obedience. To do this *in the road* is difficult. Many, finding it impossible to emerge into any consideration by walking in the beaten path of truth, and yet not able to conquer the itch of being accounted τινες μεγαλοι, turn aside into by-ways, and turn the eyes of men to them by scrambling over hedge and ditch, when the sober traveller is not at all regarded."[3] And the grand secret of continuing in the faith grounded and settled, is expressed in the following wise sentences: "That direction in this kind which with me is *instar omnium*, is for a diligent endeavour to have the power of the truths professed and contended for abiding upon our hearts;—that we may not contend for notions, but what we have a practical acquaintance with in our own souls. When the heart is cast indeed into the mould of the doctrine that the mind embraceth,—when the evidence and ne-

[1] Vaughan's Age and Christianity, pp. 79–82.

[2] Princeton Theol. Essays, First Series. Essay on the Doctrines of the Early Socinians.

[3] Preface, pp. 64, 65, quarto ed.

cessity of the truth abides in us,—when not the sense of the words only is in our heads, but the sense of the things abides in our hearts, —when we have communion with God in the doctrine we contend for,—then shall we be garrisoned by the grace of God against all the assaults of men."[1]

This secret communion with God in the doctrines contended for was the true key to Owen's own steadfastness amid all those winds of doctrine which unsettled every thing but what was rooted in the soil. We have an illustration of this in the next treatise, which he soon after gave to the world, and in which he passes from the lists of controversy to the practical exhibition of the Gospel as a life-power. It was entitled, "On the Mortification of Sin in Believers;" and contains the substance of some sermons which he had preached on Rom. viii. 13. He informs us that his chief motives for this publication were, a wish to escape from the region of public debate, and to produce something of more general use, that might seem a fruit " of choice, not of necessity;" and also, " to provide an antidote for the dangerous mistakes of some that of late years had taken upon them to give directions for the mortification of sin, who, being unacquainted with the mystery of the gospel and the efficacy of the death of Christ, have anew imposed the yoke of a self-wrought-out mortification on the necks of their disciples, which neither they nor their forefathers were ever able to bear."[2] We have no means of knowing what were the treatises to which Owen here refers; but it is well known that Baxter's mind at an early period received an injurious legal bias from a work of this kind; nor is even Jeremy Taylor's " Holy Living" free from the fault of minute prescription of external rules and " bodily exercise, which profiteth little," instead of bringing the mind into immediate contact with those great truths which inspire and transform whatever they touch. Nor have there been wanting teachers, in any age of the church, who

> " ——— do but skin and film the ulcerous place,
> While rank corruption, mining all within,
> Infects unseen."

Owen's work is a noble illustration of the Gospel method of sanctification, as we believe it to be a living reflection of his own experience. In his polemical works he was like the lecturer on the materia medica; but here he is the skilful physician, applying the medicine to the cure of soul-sickness. And it is interesting to find the ample evidence which this work affords, that, amid the din of theological controversy, the engrossing and perplexing activities of a high public station, and the chilling damps of a university, he was yet living near

[1] Preface, p. 69. [2] Preface.

God, and, like Jacob amid the stones of the wilderness, maintaining secret intercourse with the eternal and invisible.

To the affairs of Oxford we must now return for a little. In the midst of his multifarious public engagements, and the toils of a most ponderous authorship, Owen's thoughts had never been turned from the university, and his efforts for its improvement, encouraged by the Protector and his council, as well as by the co-operation of the heads of colleges, had been rewarded by a surprising prosperity. Few things, indeed, are more interesting than to look into the records of Oxford at this period, as they have been preserved by Anthony Wood and others, and to mark the constellation of great names among its fellows and students; some of whom were already in the height of their renown, and others, with a strangely varied destiny awaiting them, were brightening into a fame which was to shed its lustre on the coming age. The presiding mind at this period was Owen himself, who, from the combined influence of station and character, obtained from all around him willing deference;[1] while associated with him in close friendship, in frequent conference, and learned research, which was gradually embodied in many folios, was Thomas Goodwin, the president of Magdalen College. Stephen Charnock had already carried many honours, and given token of that Saxon vigour of intellect and ripe devotion which were afterwards to take shape in his noble treatise on the "Divine Attributes." Dr Pocock sat in the chair of Arabic, unrivalled as an Orientalist; and Dr Seth Ward taught mathematics, already noted as an astronomer, and hereafter to be less honourably noted as so supple a time-server, that, "amid all the changes of the times he never broke his bones." Robert Boyle had fled hither, seeking in its tranquil shades opportunity for undisturbed philosophic studies, and finding in all nature food for prayer; and one more tall and stately than the rest might be seen now amid the shady walks of Magdalen College, musing on the "Blessedness of the Righteous," and now in the recesses of its libraries, "unsphering the spirit of Plato," and amassing that learning and excogitating that divine philosophy which were soon to be transfigured and immortalized in his "Living Temple." Daniel Whitby, the acute annotator on the New Testament, and the ablest champion of Arminianism, now adorned the roll of Oxford,—Christopher Wren, whose architectural genius has reared its own monument in the greatest of England's cathedrals,—William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, and the father of the gentlest and most benignant of all our Christian sects,—John Locke, the founder of the greatest school of English metaphysics, to whom was to belong the high honour of basing tole-

[1] "He was reckoned the brightest ornament of the university in his time."—Dr Calamy.

ration on the principles of philosophy,—William South, the pulpit-satirist, whom we alternately admire for his brawny intellect and matchless style, and despise for their prostration to the lowest purposes of party,—Thomas Ken, the future bishop of Bath and Wells, whose holiness drew forth the willing homage of the Puritans, and whose conscientiousness as a nonjuror was long after to be proved by his sufferings in the Tower,—Philip Henry, now passing to the little conference of praying students, and now receiving from Dr Owen praises which only make him humbler, already delighting in those happy alliterations and fine conceits which were to be gathered from his lips by his admiring son, and embalmed in the transparent amber of that son's immortal Commentary,—and Joseph Alleine, who, in his "Alarm to the Unconverted," was to produce a work which the church of God will not willingly let die, and was to display the spirit of a martyr amid the approaching cruelties of the Restoration, and the deserted hearths and silent churches of St Bartholomew's Day.[1]

But events were beginning to transpire in the political world which were to bring Owen's tenure of the vice-chancellorship to a speedy close. He had hitherto befriended Cromwell in all his great measures, with the strong conviction that the liberties and general interests of the nation were bound up with his supremacy. He had even, on occasion of the risings of the Royalists under Colonel Penruddock in the west, busied himself in securing the attachment of the university, and in raising a troop of horse for the defence of the county, until one of his Royalist revilers, enraged at his infectious zeal, described him as "riding up and down like a spiritual Abaddon, *with white powder in his hair and black in his pocket.*"[2] But when a majority of the Parliament proposed to bestow upon Cromwell the crown and title of king, and when the Protector was evidently not averse to the entreaties of his Parliament, Owen began to suspect the workings of an ambition which, if not checked, would introduce a new tyranny, and place in jeopardy those liberties which so much had been done and suffered to secure. He therefore joined with Colonel Desborough, Fleetwood, and the majority of the army, in opposing these movements, and even drew up the petition which is known to have defeated the measure, and constrained Cromwell to decline the perilous honour.[3]

Many circumstances soon made it evident, that by this bold step Dr Owen had so far estranged from himself the affection of Cromwell. Up to this time he had continued to be, of all the ministers of his times, the most frequently invited to preach on those great occasions

[1] Wood's Fasti, part ii., pp. 169–197. [2] Orme, p. 120.
[3] Burnet's Own Times, i. 98. Ludlow's Memoirs, p. 248. Neal, iv. 151, 152.

of public state which it was usual in those days to grace with a religious service. But when, soon after this occurrence, Cromwell was inaugurated into his office as Protector, at Westminster Hall, with all the pomp and splendour of a coronation, those who were accustomed to watch how the winds of political favour blew, observed that Lockyer and Dr Manton were the divines who officiated at the august ceremonial; and that Owen was not even there as an invited guest.[1] This was significant, and the decisive step soon followed. On the 3d of July Cromwell resigned the office of chancellor of the university; on the 18th day of the same month, his son Richard was appointed his successor; and six weeks afterwards Dr Owen was displaced from the vice-chancellorship, and Dr Conant, a Presbyterian, and rector of Exeter College, nominated in his stead.[2]

Few things in Owen's public life more became him than the manner in which he resigned the presidency of Oxford, and yielded up the academic fasces into the hands of another. He "knew both how to abound, and how to be abased." There is no undignified insinuation of ungracious usage; no loud assertion of indifference, to cover the bitterness of chagrin; no mock humility; but a manly reference to the service which he was conscious of having rendered to the university, with a generous appreciation of the excellencies of the friend to whom the government was now to be transferred. In his parting address to the university, after stating the number of persons that had been matriculated and graduated during his administration, he continues: "Professors' salaries, lost for many years, have been recovered and paid; some offices of respectability have been maintained; the rights and privileges of the university have been defended against all the efforts of its enemies; the treasury is tenfold increased; many of every rank in the university have been promoted to various honours and benefices; new exercises have been introduced and established; old ones have been duly performed; reformation of manners has been diligently studied, in spite of the grumbling of certain profligate brawlers; labours have been numberless; besides submitting to the most enormous expense, often when brought to the brink of death on your account, I have hated these limbs, and this feeble body, which was ready to desert my mind; the reproaches of the vulgar have been disregarded, the envy of others has been overcome: in these circumstances I wish you all prosperity, and bid you farewell. I congratulate myself on a successor who can relieve me of this burden; and you on one who is able completely to repair any injury which your affairs may have suffered through our inattention. . . . . But as I know not whither the thread of my discourse might lead me, I here cut it short. I seek again my old labours, my usual watchings, my

[1] Neal, iv. 157. Orme, p. 126. [2] Neal, iv. 165.

interrupted studies. As for you, gentlemen of the university, may you be happy, and fare you well."[1]

CHAP. IV.

HIS RETIREMENT AND LAST DAYS.

A wish has sometimes been expressed, that men who, like Owen, have contributed so largely to the enriching of our theological literature, could have been spared the endless avocations of public life, and allowed to devote themselves almost entirely to authorship. But the wisdom of this sentiment is very questionable. Experience seems to testify that a certain amount of contact with the business of practical life is necessary to the highest style of thought and authorship; and that minds, when left to undisturbed literary leisure, are apt to degenerate into habits of diseased speculation and sickly fastidiousness. Most certainly the works that have come from men of monastic habits have done little for the world, compared with the writings of those who have ever been ready to obey the voice which summoned them away from tranquil studies to breast the storms and guide the movements of great social conflicts. The men who have lived the most earnestly for their own age, have also lived the most usefully for posterity. Owen's retirement from the vice-chancellorship may indeed be regarded as a most seasonable relief from the excess of public engagement; but it may be confidently questioned whether he would have written so much or so well, had his intellect and heart been, in any great degree, cut off from the stimulus which the struggles and stern realities of life gave to them. This is, accordingly, the course through which we are now rapidly to follow him,—to the end of his days continuing to display an almost miraculous fertility of authorship, that is only equalled by that of his illustrious compeer, Richard Baxter; and, at the same time, taking no second part in the great ecclesiastical movements of that most eventful age.

The next great public transaction in which we find Dr Owen engaged, was the celebrated meeting of ministers and delegates from the Independent Churches, for the purpose of preparing a confession of their faith and order, commonly known by the name of the Savoy Assembly or Synod. The Independents had greatly flourished during

[1] Conclusion of Oratio quinta, translated by Orme.—Six Latin orations, delivered by Owen at Oxford while he presided over the university, have been preserved, and used to be printed at the end of the volume that contained his sermons and tracts. They will appear in the seventh volume of the present edition of Owen's works.

the Protectorate; and many circumstances rendered such a meeting desirable. The Presbyterian members of the Westminster Assembly had often pressed on them the importance of such a public and formal exposition of their sentiments. Their Independent brethren in New England had set them the example ten years before; and the frequent misrepresentations to which they were exposed, especially through their being confounded with extravagant sectaries who sheltered themselves beneath the common name of Independents, as well as the religious benefits that were likely to accrue from mutual conference and comparison of views, appeared strongly to recommend such a measure. "We confess," say they, "that from the very first, all, or at least the generality of our churches, have been in a manner like so many ships, though holding forth the same general colours, launched singly, and sailing apart and alone on the vast ocean of these tumultuous times, and exposed to every wind of doctrine, under no other conduct than that of the Word and Spirit, and their particular elders and principal brethren, without association among themselves, or so much as holding out common lights to others, whereby to know where they were."[1]

It was with considerable reluctance, however, that Cromwell yielded his sanction to the calling of such a meeting. He remembered the anxious jealousy with which the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly had been watched, and probably had his own fears that what now began in theological discussion might end in the perilous canvassing of public measures. But his scruples were at length overcome,—circulars were issued, inviting the churches to send up their pastors and delegates, and more than two hundred brethren appeared in answer to the summons. They met in a building in the Strand, which was now commonly devoted to the accommodation of the officers of Cromwell's court, but which had formerly been a convent and an hospital, and originally the palace of the Duke of Savoy, from whom it took its name. A committee, in which Owen and Goodwin evidently bore the burden of the duties, prepared a statement of doctrine each morning, which was laid before the Assembly, discussed, and approved. They found, to their delight, that "though they had been launched singly, they had all been steering their course by the same chart, and been bound for one and the same port; and that upon the general search now made, the same holy and blessed truths of all sorts which are current and warrantable among the other churches of Christ in the world, had been their lading."[2] It is an interesting fact, that, with the exception of its statements on church order, the articles of the Savoy Confession bear a close resemblance to those of the famous Confession of the Westminster divines,—in most places

[1] Confess. Pref., p. 6. Neal, iv. 173. [2] Ibid.

retaining its very words. This was a high and graceful tribute to the excellence of that noble compend. And though Baxter, irritated by the form of some of its statements,[1] wrote severely against the Savoy Assembly, yet a spirit of extraordinary devotion appears to have animated and sustained its conferences. "There was the most eminent presence of the Lord," says an eye-witness, "with those who were then assembled, that ever I knew since I had a being."[2] And, as the natural consequence of this piety, there was an enlarged charity towards other churches "holding the Head." In the preface to the Confession, which Owen is understood to have written, and from which we have already made some beautiful extracts, this blessed temper shines forth in language that seems to have anticipated the standing-point to which the living churches of our own times are so hopefully pointing. We are reminded in one place that "the differences between Presbyterians and Independents are differences between *fellow-servants;*" and in another place, the principle is avowed, that "churches consisting of persons sound in the faith and of good conversation, ought not to refuse communion with each other, though they walk not in all things according to the same rule of church order."[3] It is well known that the Savoy Confession has never come into general use among the Independents; but there is reason to think that its first publication had the best effects; and in all likelihood the happy state of things which Philip Henry describes as distinguishing this period is referable, in part at least, to the assurance of essential unity which the Savoy Confession afforded. "There was a great change," says he, "in the tempers of good people throughout the nation, and a mighty tendency to peace and unity, as if they were by consent weary of their long clashings."[4]

What would have been the effects of these proceedings upon the policy of the Protector, had his life been prolonged, we can now only surmise. Ere the Savoy Assembly had commenced its deliberations, Oliver Cromwell was struggling with a mortal distemper in the palace of Whitehall. The death of his favourite daughter, Lady Claypole, as well as the cares of his government, had told at length upon his iron frame; and on September 3, 1658, the night of the most awful

[1] Baxter's Catholic Communion Defended, and Life, p. 104.

[2] Letter from Rev. J. Forbes of Gloucester. Asty, p xxi.

[3] Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ.

[4] Neal, iv. 178. One of the few letters of Dr Owen that have been preserved has reference to this Confession. A French minister of some eminence, the Rev. Peter du Moulin, wished to attempt a French translation of so valuable a document; but, before doing so, he ventured on some animadversions on certain of its sentiments and expressions. Owen's reply betrays some irritation, especially at Moulin's misunderstanding and consequent misrepresentation of the passages commented on. See Appendix.

storm that had ever shaken the island, and the anniversary of some of his greatest battles, Oliver Cromwell passed into the eternal world. It is no duty of ours to describe the character of this wonderful man; but our references to Owen have necessarily brought us into frequent contact with his history; and we have not sought to conceal our conviction of his religious sincerity and our admiration of his greatness. Exaggerate his faults as men may, the hypocritical theory of his character, so long the stereotyped representation of history, cannot be maintained. Those who refuse him all credit for religion must explain to us how his hypocrisy escaped the detection of the most religious men of his times, who, like Owen, had the best opportunities of observing him. Those who accuse him of despotism must tell us how it was that England, under his sway, enjoyed more liberty than it had ever done before.[1] Those who see in his character no qualities of generous patriotism, and few even of enlarged statesmanship, must reconcile this with the fact of his developing the internal resources of England to an extent which had never been approached by any previous ruler, —raising his country to the rank of a first power in Europe, until his very name became a terror to despots, and a shield to those who, like the bleeding Vaudois in the valleys of Piedmont, appealed to his compassion.

Owen, and other leading men among the Puritans, have been represented, by writers such as Burnet, as offering up the most fanatical prayers for the Protector's recovery; and after his death, on occasion of a fast, in the presence of Richard and the other members of his family, as almost irreverently reproaching God for his removal. It would be too much to affirm, that nothing extravagant or extreme was spoken, even by eminently good men, at a crisis so exciting; but there is every reason to think that Owen was not present at the death-bed of the Protector at all; and Burnet's statement,[2] when traced to its source, is found to have originated in an impression of Tillotson's,

[1] Bishop Kennet has long since given the true statement of the case in reference to the ordinances against Episcopal worship during Cromwell's government. "It is certain," says he, "that the Protector was for liberty and the utmost latitude to all parties, so far as consisted with the peace and safety of his person and government; and even the prejudice he had against the Episcopal party was more for their being Royalists than for their being of the good old church."—Neal, iv. 125. In point of fact, the ordinances were not put in execution except against such clergymen as had become political offenders.—Parr's Life of Usher, p. 75. Vaughan's Stuart Dynasty, i. 246.

[2] Burnet's Own Times, i. 116, 117. No fanatical words are directly charged upon Owen by any of his accusers, but his extravagance is freely surmised.—Biog. Dict., x. 103. Goodwin is represented as complaining in these words, "Lord, thou hast deceived us, and we were deceived;"—words which Burnet characterizes as impudent and enthusiastic boldness; but which, if used at all, were evidently accommodated from Jer. xx. 7, and used in the sense in which the prophet himself had used them; *q. d.*, "Lord, thou hast permitted us to deceive ourselves." This may probably be taken as a specimen of the looseness of the other charges.

who was as probably mistaken as otherwise. Vague gossip must not be received as the material of biography. At the same time, it cannot be doubted that the death of Cromwell filled Owen and his friends with profound regret and serious apprehension. His life and power had been the grand security for their religious liberties; and now by his death that security was dissolved. Cromwell during his lifetime had often predicted, "They will bring all to confusion again;" and now that his presiding hand was removed, the lapse of a little time was sufficient to show that he had too justly forecast the future. Ere we glance, however, at the rapid changes of those coming years, we must once more turn to Owen's labours as an author.

In 1657 he published one of his best devotional treatises,—"Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each Person distinctly, in Love, Grace, Consolation, etc." It forms the substance of a series of sermons preached by him at Oxford during his vice-chancellorship, and is another evidence of his "close walk with God" during the excitements and engagements of that high official position. There is, no doubt, some truth in the remark, that he carries out the idea of distinct communion between the believer and each of the persons of the Godhead to an extent for which there is no scriptural precedent; and this arises from another habit, observable in some degree even in this devotional composition,—that of making the particular subject on which he treats the centre around which he gathers all the great truths of the Gospel; but, when these deductions have been made, what a rich treasure is this work of Owen's! He leads us by green pastures and still waters, and lays open the exhaustless springs of the Christian's hidden life with Christ in God. It is easy to understand how some parts of it should have been unintelligible, and should even have appeared incoherent to persons whose creed was nothing more than an outward badge; and therefore we are not surprised that it should have provoked the scoffing remarks of a Rational ecclesiastic twenty years afterwards;[1] but to one who possesses even a faint measure of spiritual life, we know few exercises more congenial or salutary than its perusal. It is like passing from the dusty and beaten path into a garden full of the most fragrant flowers, from which you return still bearing about your person some parts of its odours, that reveal where you have been. And those who read the book with somewhat of this spiritual susceptibility, will sympathize with the

[1] Dr Sherlock, in a treatise entitled, "A Discourse concerning the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and our Union and Communion with Him," etc., 1674. To which Owen replied in "A Vindication of some Passages concerning Communion with God, from the Exceptions of William Sherlock, Rector of St George's, Buttolph Lane." The controversy drew a considerable number of other combatants into the field, and appears to have been protracted through a series of years.—Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 105, 106.

glowing words of Daniel Burgess regarding it: "Alphonsus, king of Spain, is said to have found food and physic in reading Livy; and Ferdinand, king of Sicily, in reading Quintus Curtius;—but thou hast here nobler entertainment, vastly richer dainties, incomparably more sovereign medicines: I had almost said, the very highest of angel's food is here set before thee; and, as Pliny speaks, 'Permista deliciis auxilia,'—things that minister unto grace and comfort, to holy life and liveliness."[1]

In the same year Owen was engaged in an important and protracted controversy on the subject of schism, which drew forth from him a succession of publications, and exposed him to the assaults of many adversaries. Foster has sarcastically remarked on the great convenience of having a number of words that will answer the purposes of ridicule or reprobation, without having any precise meaning attached to them;[2] and the use that has commonly been made of the obnoxious term, "Schism," is an illustration in point. Dominant religious parties have ever been ready to hurl this hideous weapon at those who have separated from them, from whatever cause; and the phrase has derived its chief power to injure from its vagueness. The Church of Rome has flung it at the Churches of the Reformation, and the Reformed Churches that stand at different degrees of distance from Rome, have been too ready to cast it at each other. Owen and his friends now began to feel the injurious effects of this, in the frequent application of the term to themselves; and he was induced, in consequence, to write on the subject, with the view especially of distinguishing between the scriptural and the ecclesiastical use of the term, and, by simply defining it, to deprive it of its mischievous power. This led to his treatise, "Of Schism; the true nature of it discovered, and considered with reference to the present differences in religion:" in which he shows that schism, as described in Scripture, consists in "causeless differences and contentions amongst the members of a particular church, contrary to that love, prudence, and forbearance, which are required of them to be exercised among themselves, and towards one another."[3] From this two consequences followed;—that separation from any church was not in its own nature schism; and that those churches which, by their corruption or tyranny, rendered separation necessary, were the true schismatics: so that, as Vincent Alsop wittily remarked, "He that undertakes to play this great gun, had need to be very careful and spunge it well, lest it fire at home."[4] It is one of Dr Owen's best controversial treatises, being

[1] Preface to the reader. [2] Essay on the application of the epithet Romantic.
[3] Owen's Works, xix. 132, 133, Russell's edition.
[4] Melius Inquirend., p. 209. Orme, p. 199. Wood's description of Alsop makes one suspect that he had smarted from his wit: "A Nonconforming minister, who, since the death of their famous A. Marvell, hath been quibbler and punner in ordi-

exhaustive, and yet not marked by that discursiveness which is the fault of some of his writings, and bringing into play some of his greatest excellencies as a writer,—his remarkable exegetical talent, his intimate knowledge of Scripture, and mastery of the stores of ecclesiastical history. Dr Hammond replied to him from among the Episcopalians, and Cawdrey from among the Presbyterians,—a stormy petrel, with whose spirit, Owen remarks, the Presbyterians in general had no sympathy; but Owen remained unquestionable master of the field.[1]

It was not thus with the controversy which we have next to describe. Owen had prepared a valuable little essay,—"Of the Divine Original, Authority, Self-evidencing Light and Power of the Scriptures; with an answer to that inquiry, How we know the Scriptures to be the word of God?" the principal design of which, as its title so far indicates, was to prove that, independently altogether of its external evidence, the Bible contains, in the nature of its truths and in their efficacy on the mind, satisfactory evidence of the divine source from which it has emanated;—an argument which was afterwards nobly handled by Halyburton, and which has recently been illustrated and illuminated by Dr Chalmers with his characteristic eloquence, in one of the chapters of his "Theological Institutes."[2] In this essay he had laid down the position, that "as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were immediately and entirely given out by God himself,—his mind being in them represented to us without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration to the least iota or syllable,—so, by his good and merciful providential dispensation, in his love to his Word and church, his Word as first given out by him is preserved unto us entire in the original languages."[3] It happened that while this essay was in the press, the Prolegomena and Appendix of Walton's invaluable and immortal work, the "London Polyglott," came into Owen's hands. But when he glanced at the formidable array of various readings, which was presented by Walton and his coadjutors as the result of their collation of manuscripts and versions, he became alarmed for his principles, imagined the authority of the Scriptures to be placed in imminent jeopardy, and, in an essay which he entitled, "A Vindication of the Purity and Integrity of the Hebrew and

nary to the Dissenting party, though he comes much short of that person."—Athen. Oxon., iv. 106.

[1] The other writings drawn from Owen in this controversy were provoked by Cawdrey.—1. A Review of the true Nature of Schism, with a Vindication of the Congregational Churches in England from the imputation thereof, unjustly charged on them by Mr Daniel Cawdrey, 1657. 2. An Answer to a late Treatise of Mr Cawdrey about the Nature of Schism, 1658, prefixed to a Defence of Mr John Cotton, &c., against Cawdrey, written by himself, and edited by Owen.

[2] Theological Institutes, x. b. iii. ch. 6. [3] P. 153, duod. ed.

Greek Texts of the Old and New Testaments, in some considerations on the Prolegomena and Appendix to the late Biblia Polyglotta,"[1] rashly endeavoured to prove that Walton had greatly exaggerated the number of various readings, and insinuated his apprehension, that if Walton's principles were admitted, they would lead, by a very direct course, to Popery or Infidelity. It is needless to say how undeniable is the fact of various readings; how utterly groundless were the fears which Dr Owen expressed because of them; and how much the labours of learned biblicists, in the region which was so nobly cultivated by Walton and his associates, have confirmed, instead of disturbing our confidence in the inspired canon.[2] And yet it is not difficult to understand how the same individual, who was unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in his own age in his knowledge of the subject-matter of revelation, should have been comparatively uninformed on questions which related to the integrity of the sacred text itself. The error of Owen consisted in making broad assertions on a subject on which he acknowledged himself to be, after all, but imperfectly informed; and, from a mere *a priori* ground, challenging facts that were sustained by very abundant evidence, and charging those facts with the most revolting consequences. Let those theologians be warned by it, who, on the ground of preconceived notions and incorrect interpretations of Scripture, have called in question some of the plainest discoveries of science; and be assured that truth, come from what quarter it may, can never place the Word of God in jeopardy.

Walton saw that he had the advantage of Owen, and in "The Considerator Considered, and the Biblia Polyglotta Vindicated," successfully defended his position, and did what he could to hold Owen up to the ridicule of the learned world. Though he was Owen's victor in this controversy, yet the arrogance of his bearing excites the suspicion that something more than learned zeal bore him into the contest, and that the exasperated feelings of the ecclesiastic made him not unwilling to humble this leader and champion of the Puritans in the dust. The respective merits of the two combatants in this contest, which excited so much commotion in the age in which it occurred, are admirably remarked on by Dr Chalmers: "The most interesting collision upon this question that I know of, between unlike men of unlike minds, was that between the most learned of our Churchmen on the one hand, Brian Walton, author, or rather editor, of the 'London Polyglott,' and the most talented and zealous of our sectarians on the other, Dr John Owen. The latter adventured him-

[1] Owen published a third tract in this little volume, "Exercitationes adversus Fanaticos," in which he handled the Quakers with some severity.

[2] Marsh's Michaelis, i. ch. vi. Taylor's History of the Transmission of Ancient Books; appendix.

self most rashly into a combat, and under a false alarm for the results of the erudition of the former; and the former retorted contemptuously upon his antagonist, as he would upon a mystic or enthusiastic devotee. The amalgamation of the two properties thus arrayed in hostile conflict, would have just made up a perfect theologian. It would have been the wisdom of the letter in alliance with the wisdom of the Spirit; instead of which I know not what was most revolting,—the lordly insolence of the prelate, or the outrageous violence of the Puritan. In the first place, it was illiterate in Owen, to apprehend that the integrity of the Scripture would be unsettled by the exposure, in all their magnitude and multitude, of its various readings; but in the second place, we stand in doubt of Walton's spirit and his seriousness, when he groups and characterizes as the new-light men and ranting enthusiasts of these days, those sectaries, many of whom, though far behind him in the lore of theology as consisting in the knowledge of its vocables, were as far before him in acquaintance with the subject-matter of theology, as consisting of its doctrines, and of their application to the wants and the principles of our moral nature."[1]

About the time of his emerging from this unfortunate controversy, Owen gave to the world his work on Temptation,—another of those masterly treatises in which he "brings the doctrines of theology to bear on the wants and principles of our moral nature," and from which whole paragraphs flash upon the mind of the reader with an influence that makes him feel as if they had been written for himself alone.

In his preface to that work, Owen (no doubt reflecting his impressions of public events) speaks of "providential dispensations, in reference to the public concernments of these nations, as perplexed and entangled,—the footsteps of God lying in the deep, where his paths are not known." And certainly the rapid and turbulent succession of changes that took place soon after the removal of Cromwell's presiding genius from the helm, might well fill him with deepening anxiety and alarm. These changes it is not our province minutely to trace. Richard's feeble hand, as is well known, proved itself unfit to control the opposing elements of the state; and a few months saw him return, not unwillingly, to the unambitious walks of private life.[2] Owen has been charged with taking part in the schemes which drove Richard from the Protectorate; but the charge proceeded upon a mere impression of Dr Manton's, produced from hearing the fragment of a conversation, and was repeatedly and indignantly denied by Owen during his

[1] Institutes of Theology, i. 287—On Scripture Criticism.

[2] Owen's sermon, "A Gospel Profession, the Glory of a Nation," Isa. iv. 5, was preached before Richard's Parliament. Soon after, he preached before the Long Parliament; and this was the last occasion in which he was invited to officiate before such an assemblage. This sermon has not been preserved.

life.[1] Then followed the recalling of that remnant of the Long Parliament which had been dispersed by Cromwell,—a measure which Owen advised, as, on the whole, the most likely to secure the continuance of an unrestricted liberty. But the Parliament, unwilling to obey the dictation of a dominant party in the army, was once more dispersed by force, while the army itself began to be divided into ambitious factions. A new danger threatened from the north. General Monk, marking the state of things in England, and especially the divided condition of the army, was making preparations to enter England. What were his designs? At one period he had befriended the Independents, but latterly he had sided with the powerful body of the Presbyterians. Would he now, then, endeavour to set up a new Protectorate, favouring the Presbyterians and oppressing other sects? or would he throw his sword into the scale of the Royalists, and bring back the Stuarts? A deputation of Independent ministers, consisting of Caryl and others, was sent into Scotland, bearing a letter to Monk that had been written by Owen, representing to him the injustice of his entering England, and the danger to which it would expose their most precious liberties. But the deputies returned, unable to influence his movements, or even to penetrate his ultimate designs. Owen and his friends next endeavoured to arouse the army to a vigorous resistance of Monk, and even offered to raise £100,000 among the Independents for their assistance;—but they found the army divided and dispirited; and Monk, gradually approaching London, entered it at length, not only unresisted, but welcomed by thousands, the Long Parliament having again found courage to resume its sittings. In a short while the Long Parliament was finally dissolved by its own consent, and soon after the Convention Parliament assembled. Monk at length threw off his hitherto impenetrable disguise, and ventured to introduce letters from Charles Stuart. It was voted, at his instigation, that the ancient constitution of King, Lords, and Commons, should be restored, and Charles invited back to the throne of his ancestors; and the great majority of the nation, weary of the years of faction and turbulence, hailed the change with joy. But in the enthusiasm of the moment, no means were taken to secure an adjustment of those vital questions which had been agitated between the people and the crown. The act, therefore, which restored the king,

[1] Dr Manton declared, that at Wallingford House he heard Dr Owen say with vehemence, "He must come down, and he shall come down;" and this was understood to refer to Richard;—but it is material to notice that Dr Manton did not so understand it till after the event.—Palmer's note to Calamy's Life of Owen. Noncon. Mem., i. 201. Add to this Owen's solemn denial of the charge, Vindic. of Animadversions on Fiat Lux, p. 127; and the testimony of a "worthy minister," preserved by Asty, that Dr Owen was against the pulling down of Richard, and that his dissatisfaction at what they were doing at Wallingford House was such as to drive him into illness.—Asty, p. xix.

restored the laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, to the state in which they had been at the commencement of the war, re-established the hierarchy, and constituted all classes of separatists a proscribed class; and Owen and his party had little to trust to for the continuance of their religious liberties but the promise of Charles at Breda, that he "would have a respect to tender consciences."[1] A little time sufficed to show that the king's word was but a miserable security; and the beautiful words of Baxter now began to be fulfilled in their darkest part: "Ordinarily, God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the church may grow externally in the summer of prosperity, and internally and radically in the winter of adversity; yet usually their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests." The night was now coming to the Puritans.

A few months before the restoration of Charles, Owen had been displaced from the deanery of Christ Church, and thus his last official connection with Oxford severed. He now retired to his native village of Stadham in the neighbourhood, where he had become the proprietor of a small estate. During his vice-chancellorship, it had been his custom to preach in this place on the afternoons of those Sabbaths in which he was not employed at St Mary's; and a little congregation which he had gathered by this means now joyfully welcomed him among them as their pastor. It was probably while at Stadham that he finished the preparation of one of his most elaborate theological works, whose title will supply a pretty accurate idea at once of its general plan and of its remarkable variety of matter,—"Theologoumena, etc.; or, six books on the nature, rise, progress, and study of true theology. In which, also, the origin and growth of true and false religious worship, and the more remarkable declensions and restorations of the church are traced from their first sources. To which are added digressions concerning universal grace,—the origin of the sciences,—notes of the Roman Church,—the origin of letters,—the ancient Hebrew letters,—Hebrew punctuation,—versions of the Scriptures,—Jewish rites," etc. It is matter of regret that the "Theologoumena" has hitherto been locked up in the Latin tongue; for though parts have been superseded by more recent works, there is no book in the English language that occupies the wide field over which Owen travels with his usual power, and scatters around him his learned stores.[2]

In all likelihood Owen hoped that he would be permitted to remain unmolested in his quiet village, and that his very obscurity

[1] Neal, iv. 191–220. Vaughan's Stuart Dynasty, ii. 266–271.

[2] A portion of the "Theologoumena" was translated and published by the Rev. J. Craig of Avonbridge in Scotland; but the encouragement was not such as to induce him to persevere.

would prove his protection; but he had miscalculated the leniency of the new rulers. An act passed against the Quakers, declared it illegal for more than five persons to assemble in any unauthorized place for religious worship; and this act admitting of application to all separatists, soon led to the expulsion of Owen from his charge, and to the dispersion of his little flock.[1] In a little while he saw himself surrounded by many companions in tribulation. The Presbyterians, who had shown such eagerness for the restoration of Charles to his throne, naturally expected that such measures would be taken as would comprehend them within the establishment, without doing violence to their conscientious difficulties; and Charles and his ministers flattered the hope so long as they thought it unsafe to despise it; but it was not long ere the Act of Uniformity drove nearly two thousand of them from their churches into persecution and poverty, and brought once more into closer fellowship with Owen those excellent men whom he had continued to love and esteem in the midst of all their mutual differences.

Sir Edward Hyde, the future Lord Clarendon, was now lord chancellor, and the most influential member of the government, and means were used to obtain an interview between Owen and him, with the view, it is probable, of inducing him to relax the growing severity of his measures against the Nonconformists. But the proud minister was inexorable. He insisted that Owen should abstain from preaching; but at the same time, not ignorant of the great talents of the Puritan, strongly urged him to employ his pen at the present juncture in writing against Popery. Owen did not comply with the first part of the injunction, but continued to preach in London and elsewhere, to little secret assemblies, and even at times more publicly, when the vigilance of informers was relaxed, or the winds of persecution blew for a little moment less fiercely. But circumstances soon put it in his power to comply with the latter part of it; and those circumstances are interesting, both as illustrative of the character of Owen and of the spirit and tendencies of the times.

John Vincent Cane, a Franciscan friar, had published a book entitled, "Fiat Lux; or, a Guide in Differences of Religion betwixt Papist and Protestant, Presbyterian and Independent;" in which, under the guise of recommending moderation and charity, he invites men over to the Church of Rome, as the only infallible remedy for all church divisions. The work falling in to some extent with the current of feeling in certain quarters, had already gone through two impressions ere it reached the hands of Owen, and is believed to have been sent to him at length by Clarendon. Struck with the subtle and pernicious character of the work, whose author he de-

[1] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 100.

scribes as "a Naphtali speaking goodly words, but while his voice was Jacob's voice, his hands were the hands of Esau," Owen set himself to answer it, and soon produced his "Animadversions on Fiat Lux, by a Protestant;" which so completely exposed its sophistries and hidden aims, as to make the disconcerted friar lose his temper. The friar replied in a "Vindication of Fiat Lux,"—in which he betrayed a vindictive wish to detect his opponent, and bring upon him the resentment of those in power; describing him as "a part of that dismal tempest which had borne all before it,—not only church and state, but reason, right, honesty, and all true religion."[1] To which Owen rejoined, now manfully giving his name, and, according to his custom, not satisfied with answering his immediate opponent, entered largely into the whole Popish controversy. Few things are more remarkable in Owen than the readiness with which he could thus summon to his use the vast stores of his accumulated learning.

But, even after this good service had been done to the common cause of Protestantism, there seemed a danger that this second work would not be permitted to be published; and it is curious to notice the nature of the objections, and the quarter whence they came. The power of licensing books in divinity was now in the hands of the bishops; and they were found to have two weighty objections to Owen's treatise. First, That in speaking of the evangelists and apostles, and even of Peter, he withheld from them the title of "saint;" and, secondly, That he had questioned whether it could be proved that Peter had ever been at Rome. Owen's treatment of these objections was every way worthy of himself. In reference to the former, he reminded his censors that the titles of evangelist and apostle were superior to that of saint, inasmuch as this belonged to all the people of God; at the same time, he expressed his willingness to yield this point. But the second he could only yield on one condition,—namely, that they would prove that he had been mistaken. Owen's book at length found its way to the press; not, however, through the concessions of the bishops, but through the command of Sir Edward Nicolas, one of the principal secretaries of state, who interposed to overrule their scruples.[2]

Dr Owen's reputation was greatly extended by these writings; and this led to a new interview with Clarendon. His lordship acknowledged that he had done more for the cause of Protestantism than any other man in England; and, expressing his astonishment that so learned a man should have been led away by "the novelty of Independency," held out to him the hope of high preferment in the church if he would conform. Owen undertook to prove, in answer to any bishop that he might appoint, that the Independent form of

[1] Vindic. of Animad. on Fiat Lux, p. 10. [2] Asty, pp. xxiii., xxiv.

church order, instead of being a novelty, was the only mode of government in the church for the first two centuries; and as for his wish to bestow upon him ecclesiastical honours, what he had to ask for himself and his brethren was, not preferment within the church, but simple toleration without it. The dazzling bait of a mitre appears to have been set before all the leading Nonconformists; but not one of them yielded to its lure.[1] This led the chancellor to inquire what was the measure of toleration he had to ask;—to which Owen is reported to have answered, "Liberty for all who assented to the doctrine of the Church of England." This answer has been remarked on by some at the expense of his consistency and courage; and the explanation has been suggested, that he now asked not all that he wished, but all that there was the most distant hope of receiving. It should be remembered, however, in addition, that many of the most liberal and enlightened men among the Nonconformists of those days objected to the full toleration of Papists;[2] not, indeed, on religious, but on political grounds;—both because they were the subjects of a foreign power, and because of the bearings of the question on the succession of the Duke of York to the throne; and also, that Owen's plan would actually have comprehended in it almost the whole of the Protestant Nonconformists of that age.

A more honourable way of deliverance from his troubles than conformity was, about the same time, presented to Dr Owen, in an earnest invitation from the first Congregational church of Boston, in New England, to become their pastor. They had "seen his labours, and heard of the grace and wisdom communicated to him from the Father of lights;" and when so many candles were not permitted to shine in England, they were eager to secure such a burning light for their infant colony. It does not very clearly appear what sort of answer Owen returned. One biographer represents him as willing to go, and as even having some of his property embarked in a vessel bound for New England, when he was stopped by orders of the court; others represent him as unwilling to leave behind him the struggling cause, and disposed to wait in England for happier days.[3]

But neither the representations of Owen nor of others who were friendly to the Nonconformists, had any influence in changing the policy of those who were now in power. The golden age to which Clarendon and his associates sought to bring back the government

[1] "I am informed," says the author of the Anonymous Memoir, "by one of the Doctor's relations, that King Charles II. offered him a bishopric; but no worldly honour or advantage could prevail on the Doctor to change his principles."—P. xxii.

[2] Owen's Discourse of Toleration, *passim*.

[3] Anthony Wood is amusingly cynical in his account of this matter: "Upon this our author resolved to go to New England; but since that time, the wind was never in a right point for a voyage."—Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 100.

and the country, was that of Laud, with all the tortures of the Star Chamber, the dark machinery of the High Commission, and the dread alternative of abject conformity, or proscription and ruin. And the licentious Charles, while affecting at times a greater liberality, joined with his ministers in their worst measures; either from a secret sympathy with them, or, as is more probable, from a hope that the ranks of Nonconformity would at length be so greatly swelled as to render a measure of toleration necessary that would include in it the Romanist along with the Puritan. Pretexts were sought after and eagerly seized upon, in order to increase the rigours of persecution; and new acts passed, such as the Conventicle Act, which declared it penal to hold meetings for worship, even in barns and highways, and offered high rewards to informers,—and whose deliberate intention was, either to compel the sufferers to conformity, or to goad them on to violence and crime.

In the midst of these growing rigours, which were rapidly filling the prisons with victims, and crowding the emigrant ships with exiles, the plague appeared, sweeping London as with a whirlwind of death. Then it was seen who had been the true spiritual shepherds of the people, and who had been the strangers and the hirelings. The clerical oppressors of the Puritans fled from the presence of the plague, while the proscribed preachers emerged from their hiding-places, shared the dangers of that dreadful hour, addressed instruction and consolation to the perishing and bereaved, and stood between the living and the dead, until the plague was stayed. One thing, however, had been disclosed by these occurrences; and this was the undiminished influence of the Nonconformist pastors over their people, and the increased love of their people to them; nor could the pastors ever be cut off from the means of temporal support, so long as intercourse between them and their people was maintained. This led to the passing of another act, whose ingenious cruelty historians have vied with each other adequately to describe. In the Parliament at Oxford, which had fled thither in order to escape the ravages of the plague, a law was enacted which virtually banished all Nonconformist ministers five miles from any city, town, or borough, that sent members to Parliament, and five miles from any place whatsoever where they had at any time in a number of years past preached; unless they would take an oath which it was well known no Nonconformist could take, and which the Earl of Southampton even declared, in his place in Parliament, no honest man could subscribe. This was equivalent to driving them into exile in their own land; and, in addition to the universal severance of the pastors from their people, by banishing them into remote rural districts, it exposed them not only to the caprice of those who were the instruments of government,

and to all the vile acts of spies and informers, but often to the insults and the violence of ignorant and licentious mobs.

Dr Owen suffered in the midst of all these troubles; and one anecdote, which most probably belongs to this period, presents us with another picture of the times. He had gone down to visit his old friends in the neighbourhood of Oxford, and adopting the usual precautions of the period, had approached his lodging after night-fall. But notwithstanding all his privacy, he was observed, and information given of the place where he lay. Early in the morning, a company of troopers came and knocked at the door. The mistress coming down, boldly opened the door, and asked them what they would have.—"Have you any lodgers in your house?" they inquired. Instead of directly answering their question, she asked "whether they were seeking for Dr Owen?" "Yes," said they; on which she assured them he had departed that morning at an earlier hour. The soldiers believing her word, immediately rode away. In the meantime the Doctor, whom the woman really supposed to have been gone, as he intended the night before, arose, and going into a neighbouring field, whither he ordered his horse to be brought to him, hastened away by an unfrequented path towards London.

A second terrible visitation of Heaven was needed, in order to obtain for the persecuted Puritans a temporary breathing-time: and this second visitation came. The fire followed quickly in the footsteps of the plague, and the hand of intolerance was for the moment paralyzed, if, indeed, its heart did not for a time relent. The greater number of the churches were consumed in the dreadful conflagration. Large wooden houses called tabernacles were quickly reared, amid the scorched and blackened ruins; and in these the Nonconformist ministers preached to anxious and solemnized multitudes. The long silent voices of Owen, and Manton, and Caryl, and others, awoke the remembrance of other times; and earnest Baxter

> "Preached as though he ne'er should preach again;
> And like a dying man to dying men."

There was no possibility of silencing these preachers at such a moment. And the fall of Clarendon and the disgrace of Sheldon soon afterwards helped to prolong and enlarge their precarious liberty.

Many tracts, for the most part published anonymously, and without even the printer's name, had issued from Owen's pen during these distracting years, having for their object to represent the impolicy and injustice of persecution for conscience' sake.[1] He had also published

[1] Of these Mr Orme enumerates the following:—1. "An Account of the Grounds and Reasons on which the Protestant Dissenters Desire their Liberty." 2. "A Letter concerning the Present Excommunications." 3. "The Present Distresses on Nonconformists Examined." 4. "Indulgence and Toleration Considered, in a Letter to a Person of Honour." 5. "A Peace-offering, in an Apology and humble Plea for Liberty of Conscience."—P. 234.

"A Brief Instruction in the Worship of God and Discipline of the Churches of the New Testament, by way of question and answer,"—a title which sufficiently describes the book;[1] and some years earlier, a well compacted and admirably reasoned "Discourse concerning Liturgies and their Imposition," which illustrates the principle on which, when a student at Oxford, he had resisted the impositions of Laud,—a principle which reaches to the very foundation of the argument between the High Churchman and the Puritan. And his publications during the following year show with what untiring assiduity, in the midst of all those outward storms, he had been plying the work of authorship, and laying up rich stores for posterity. Three of Owen's best works bear the date of 1668.

First, there is his treatise "On the Nature, Power, Deceit, and Prevalence of Indwelling Sin in Believers;" on which Dr Chalmers has well remarked, that "there is no treatise of its learned and pious author more fitted to be useful to the Christian disciple; and that it is most important to be instructed on this subject by one who had reached such lofty attainments in holiness, and whose profound and experimental acquaintance with the spiritual life so well fitted him for expounding its nature and operations."[2] Next came his "Exposition of the 130th Psalm,"—a work which, as we have already hinted, stood intimately connected with the history of Owen's own inner life; and which, conducting the reader through the turnings and windings along many of which he himself had wandered in the season of his spiritual distresses, shows him the way in which he at length found peace. When Owen sat down to the exposition of this psalm, it was not with the mere literary implements of study scattered around him, or in the spirit with which the mere scholar may be supposed to sit down to the explanation of an ancient classic; but, when he laid open the book of God, he laid open at the same time the book of his own heart and of his own history, and produced a book which, with all its acknowledged prolixity, and even its occasional obscurity, is rich in golden thoughts, and instinct with the living experience of "one who spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen."

Then appeared the first volume of Owen's greatest work, his "Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews,"—a work which it would be alike superfluous to describe or to praise.[3] For more than twenty

[1] The publication of this Catechism gave occasion to proposals for union among the Presbyterians and Independents, addressed by the sanguine Baxter to Dr Owen, and led to lengthened correspondence and negotiation. For reasons formerly adverted to, the scheme proved abortive. One of Owen's letters on this subject has been preserved, and appears in the Appendix. We are not sure that in every part of it we could vindicate the Doctor's consistency.

[2] Introductory Essay to Owen on Indwelling Sin, pp. xviii., xix.

[3] The second volume was published in 1674; the third in 1680; the fourth was posthumous, but was left fit for the press, and appeared in 1684.

years his thoughts had been turned to the preparing of this colossal commentary on the most difficult of all the Pauline epistles; and at length he had given himself to it with ripened powers,—with the gathered treasures of an almost universal reading, and with the richer treasures still of a deep Christian experience. Not disdainful of the labours of those who had gone before him, he yet found that the mine had been opened, rather than exhausted; and, as he himself strongly expressed it, that "sufficient ground for renewed investigation had been left, not only for the present generation, but for all them that should succeed, to the consummation of all things." The spirit and manner in which he pursued his work is described by himself, and forms one of the most valuable portions of autobiography in all Owen's writings:—

"For the exposition of the epistle itself, I confess, as was said before, that I have had thoughts of it for many years, and have not been without regard to it in the whole course of my studies. But yet I must now say, that, after all my searching and reading, prayer and assiduous meditation have been my only resort, and by far the most useful means of light and assistance. By these have my thoughts been freed from many an entanglement, into which the writings of others had cast me, or from which they could not deliver me. Careful I have been, as of my life and soul, to bring no prejudicate sense to the words,—to impose no meaning of my own or other men's upon them, nor to be imposed on by the reasonings, pretences, or curiosities of any; but always went nakedly to the Word itself, to learn humbly the mind of God in it, and to express it as he should enable me. To this end, I always considered, in the first place, the sense, meaning, and import of the words of the text,—their original derivation, use in other authors, especially in the LXX. of the Old Testament, in the books of the New, and particularly the writings of the same author. Ofttimes the words expressed out of the Hebrew, or the things alluded to among that people, I found to give much light to the words of the apostle. To the general rule of attending to the design and scope of the place, the subject treated of, mediums fixed on for arguments, and methods of reasoning, I still kept in my eye the time and season of writing this epistle; the state and condition of those to whom it was written; their persuasions, prejudices, customs, light, and traditions. I kept also in my view the covenant and worship of the church of old; the translation of covenant privileges and worship to the Gentiles upon a new account; the course of providential dispensations that the Jews were under; the near expiration of their church and state; the speedy approach of their utter abolition and destruction, with the temptations that befell them on all these various accounts;—without which it is impossible for any one justly

to follow the apostle, so as to keep close to his design or fully to understand his meaning."[1] The result has been, a work unequalled in excellence, except, perhaps, by Vitringa's noble Commentary on Isaiah. It is quite true, that in the department of verbal criticism, and even in the exposition of some occasional passages, future expositors may have found Owen at fault,—it is even true that the Rabbinical lore with which the work abounds does far more to cumber than to illustrate the text; but when all this has been conceded, how amazing is the power with which Owen has unfolded the proportions, and brought out the meaning and spirit, of this massive epistle! It is like some vast minster filled with solemn light, on whose minuter details it might be easy to suggest improvement; but whose stable walls and noble columns astonish you at the skill and strength of the builder the longer you gaze; and there is true sublimity in the exclamation with which Owen laid down his pen when he had finished it: "Now, my work is done; it is time for me to die." Perhaps no minister in Great Britain or America for the last hundred and fifty years has sat down to the exposition of this portion of inspired truth without consulting Owen's commentary. The appalling magnitude of the work is the most formidable obstacle to its usefulness; and this the author himself seems to have anticipated even in his own age of ponderous and portly folios; for we find him modestly suggesting the possibility of treating it as if it were three separate works, and of reading the philological, or the exegetical, or the practical portion alone.[2] We are quite aware that one man of great eminence has spoken in terms of disparagement almost bordering on contempt of one part of this great work,—"The Preliminary Exercitations;"[3] but we must remember Hall's love of literary paradoxes, in common with the great lexicographer whom he imitated; and those who are familiar with the writings of Owen—which Hall acknowledges he was not,—will be more disposed to subscribe to the glowing terms in which his great rival in eloquence has spoken of Owen's Exposition: "Let me again recommend your studious and sustained attention," says Dr Chalmers to his students, "to the Epistle to the Hebrews; and I should rejoice if any of you felt emboldened on my advice to grapple with a work so ponderous as Owen's commentary on that epistle,—a lengthened and laborious enterprise, certainly, but now is your season for abundant labour. And the only thing to be attended to is, that, in virtue of being well directed, it shall not be wasted on a bulky, though at the same time profitless erudition. I promise you a hundred-fold more advantage from the perusal of this greatest work of John Owen, than

[1] Preface. [2] Address to Christian Reader, vol. ii.

[3] Miscellaneous Gleanings from Hall's Conversational Remarks, by the late Dr Balmer of Berwick-on-Tweed. Hall's Works, vi. 147.

from the perusal of all that has been written on the subject of the heathen sacrifices. It is a work of gigantic strength as well as gigantic size; and he who hath mastered it is very little short, both in respect to the doctrinal and the practical of Christianity, of being an erudite and accomplished theologian."[1]

It has been remarked, that there is no lesson so difficult to learn as that of true religious toleration, for almost every sect in turn, when tempted by the power, has resorted to the practice of persecution; and this remark has seldom obtained more striking confirmation than in what was occurring at this time in another part of the world. While in England the Independents, and Nonconformists generally, were passing from one degree of persecution to another, at the hands of the restored adherents of Prelacy; the Independents of New England were perpetrating even greater severities against the Baptists and Quakers in that infant colony. Whipping, fines, imprisonment, selling into slavery, were punishments inflicted by them on thousands who, after all, did not differ from their persecutors on any point that was fundamental in religion. One of Owen's biographers has taken very unnecessary pains to show that the conduct of these churches had no connection with their principles as Independents; but this only renders their conduct the more inexcusable, and proves how deeply rooted the spirit of intolerance is in human nature. Owen and his friends heard of these events with indignation and shame, and even feared that they might be turned to their disadvantage in England; and, in a letter subscribed along with him by all his brethren in London, faithfully remonstrated with the New England persecutors. "We only make it our hearty request," said they, "that you will trust God with his truth and ways, so far as to suspend all rigorous proceedings in corporeal restraints or punishments on persons that dissent from you, and practise the principles of their dissent without danger or disturbance to the civil peace of the place." Sound advice is here given, but we should have relished a little more of the severity of stern rebuke.[2]

We have seen that the great fire of London led to a temporary connivance at the public preaching of the Nonconformist ministers; "it being at the first," as Baxter remarked, "too gross to forbid an undone people all public worship with too great rigour."[3] A scheme was soon after devised for giving to this liberty a legal sanction, and which might even perhaps incorporate many of the Nonconformists with the Established Church,—such men as Wilkins, bishop of Ches-

[1] Prelections on Hill's Lectures. Chalmers's Posthumous Works, ix. 282.
[2] M'Crie's Miscellaneous Works, p. 509. Magnalia Americana, b. vii. p. 28. Orme, p. 258.
[3] Own Life, part iii. p. 20.

ter, Tillotson, and Stillingfleet, warmly espousing the proposal. But no sooner did the scheme become generally known, as well as the influential names by which it was approved, than the implacable adversaries of the Nonconformists anew bestirred themselves, and succeeded in extinguishing its generous provisions. It became necessary, however, in the temper of the nation, to do something in vindication of these severities; and no readier expedient suggested itself than to decry toleration as unfriendly to social order, and still more to blacken the character of the Nonconformist sufferers. A fit instrument for this work presented himself in Samuel Parker, a man of menial origin, who had for a time been connected with the Puritans, but who, deserting them when they became sufferers, was now aspiring after preferment in the Episcopal Church, and whom Burnet describes as "full of satirical vivacity, considerably learned, but of no judgment; and as to religion, rather impious."[1] In his "Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity," the "authority of the civil magistrate over the consciences of subjects in matters of external religion is asserted, the mischiefs and inconveniences of toleration are represented, and all pretences pleaded in favour of liberty of conscience are fully answered." Such is the atrocious title-page of his book, and to a modern reader, the undertaking to which it pledges him must seem rather bold; but the confident author is reported to have firmly believed in his own success. Holding out his book to the Earl of Anglesea, he said, "Let us see, my lord, whether any of your chaplains can answer it;" and the bigoted Sheldon, sympathizing with its spirit, naturally believed also in the exceeding force of its arguments. Dr Owen was chosen to reply to Parker; which he did, in one of the noblest controversial treatises that were ever penned by him,—"Truth and Innocence Vindicated, in a Survey of a Discourse on Ecclesiastical Polity," etc. The mind of Owen seems to have been whetted by his deep sense of wrong, and he writes with a remarkable clearness and force of argument; while he indulges at times in a style of irony which is justified not more by the folly than by the baseness and wickedness of Parker's sentiments. There is no passage, even in the writings of Locke, in which the province of the civil magistrate is more distinctly defined than in some portions of his reply;[2] and it is curious to notice how, in his allusions to trade, he anticipates some of the most established principles of our modern political economy.[3] Owen's work greatly increased his celebrity among his brethren;—even some of Parker's friends could with difficulty conceal the impression that he had found more than a match in the strong-minded and sturdy Puritan; and Parker, worsted in argument, next sought to overwhelm his opponent with a scurrility that breathed the most

[1] Burnet's Own Times, i. 382. [2] Duod. ed., p. 92. [3] Duod. ed., pp. 78–81.

undisguised vindictiveness. He was "the great bell-wether of disturbance and sedition,"—"a person who would have vied with Mahomet himself both for boldness and imposture,"—"a viper, so swollen with venom that it must either burst or spit its poison;" so that whoever wished to do well to his country, "could never do it better service than by beating down the interest and reputation of such sons of Belial."[1] On this principle, at least, Parker himself might have ranked high as a patriot.

But the controversy was not over. Parker had not time to recover from the ponderous club of Owen, when he was assailed by the keen-edged wit of Andrew Marvell. This accomplished man, the under-secretary and bosom friend of Milton, reviewed Parker's work in his "Rehearsal Transprosed,"—a work of which critics have spoken as rivalling in some places the causticity and neatness of Swift, and in others equalling the eloquent invective of Junius and the playful exuberance of Burke.[2] The conceited ecclesiastic was overwhelmed, and a number of masked combatants perceiving his plight, now rushed to his defence; in all whom, however, Marvell refused to distinguish any but Parker. In a second part of his "Rehearsal," he returned to the pen-combat, as Wood has called it; and transfixed his victim with new arrows from his exhaustless quiver. It is impossible to read many parts of it yet, without sharing with the laughers of the age in the influence of Marvell's genius. Ridiculing his self-importance, he says, "If he chance but to sneeze, he prays that *the foundations of the earth be not shaken.* Ever since he crept up to be but *the weather-cock of a steeple,* he trembles and cracks at every puff of wind that blows about him, as *if the Church of England were falling.*" Marvell's wit was triumphant; and even Charles and his court joined in laughing at Parker's discomfiture.[3] "Though the delinquent did not lay violent hands on himself," says D'Israeli, "he did what, for an author, may be considered as desperate a course,—withdraw from the town, and cease writing for many years," secretly nursing a revenge which he did not dare to gratify until he knew that Marvell was in his grave.[4]

It was one thing, however, to conquer in the field of argument, and another thing to disarm the intolerance of those in power. The Parliament which met in 1671, goaded on by those sleepless eccle-

[1] Defence and Continuation of Ecclesiast. Polity, and Preface to Bramhall. Orme, p. 261.

[2] Campbell's Essay on English Poetry, p. 241. D'Israeli's Miscellanies of Literature, p. 238.

[3] Burnet, referring to this controversy, speaks of Marvell as "the liveliest droll of his age, who writ in a burlesque strain, but with so peculiar and so entertaining a conduct, that, from the king down to the tradesman, his books were read with great pleasure."—Own Times, i. 382.

[4] D'Israeli's Miscellanies, pp. 234, 239.

sassins who were animated by the malign spirit of Parker, confirmed all the old acts against the Nonconformists, and even passed others of yet more intolerable rigour.[1] It is impossible to predict to what consequences the enforcement of these measures must soon have led, had not Charles, by his declaration of indulgence, of his own authority suspended the penal statutes against Nonconformists and Popish recusants, and given them permission to renew their meetings for public worship on their procuring a licence, which would be granted for that purpose. This measure was, no doubt, unconstitutional in its form, and more than doubtful in the motives which prompted it; but many of the Nonconformists, seeing in it only the restoration of a right of which they ought never to have been deprived,—and some of them, like Owen, regarding it as "an expedient, according to the custom in former times, for the peace and security of the kingdom, until the whole matter might be settled in Parliament,"—joyfully took shelter under its provisions.[2]

The Nonconformists were prompt in improving their precarious breathing-time. A weekly lecture was instituted at Pinner's Hall by the Presbyterians and Independents, in testimony of their union of sentiment on fundamental truths, and as an antidote to Popish, Socinian, and Infidel opinions.[3] Owen began to preach more publicly in London to a regular congregation; and his venerable friend, Joseph Caryl, having died soon after the declaration of indulgence, the congregations of the two ministers consented to unite under the ministry of Owen, in the place of worship in Leadenhall Street.[4] Owen's church-book presents the names of some of the chiefs of Nonconformity as members of his flock, and "honourable women not a few."[5] Among others, there have been found the names of more than one of the heroes of the army of the Commonwealth,—such as Lord Charles Fleetwood and Colonel Desborough; certain members of the Abney family, in whose hospitable mansion the saintly Isaac

[1] A paper entitled, "The State of the Kingdom with respect to the present Bill against Conventicles," was drawn up by Owen, and laid before the Lords by several eminent citizens, but without success.

[2] Biographers make mention of letters addressed to Owen, inviting him to the presidency of Harvard College, New England, and also to a professorship in the United Provinces. But there is considerable vagueness in respect to details, as well as uncertainty about dates. A note, however, in Wood's Athen. Oxon., seems to place beyond reasonable doubt the general accuracy of the statement. He is said by the same authority to have been prevented from accepting the former invitation by an order from court.

[3] Two lectures preached by Owen in this series appear among his works,—the first entitled, "How we may Learn to Bear Reproofs," Ps. cxli. 5; the other, "The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of Rome Laid Open," 1 Pet. ii. 8.

[4] Mr Orme supposes the place of worship to have been that in Bury Street, St Mary Axe; but the meeting-house in Bury Street was not erected until 1708, when it was occupied by the same congregation under the ministry of Dr Isaac Watts.—Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches, i. 252, 278.

[5] Orme, pp. 277–283.

Watts in after times found shelter for more than thirty years, the Countess of Anglesea; and Mrs Bendish, the grand-daughter of Cromwell, in whom, it is said, many of the bodily and mental features of the Protector remarkably re-appeared. Some of these might be able at times to throw their shield over the head of Owen in those changeful and stormy years. And there were other persons more powerful still,—such as the Earl of Orrery, the Earl of Anglesea, Lord Berkley, Lord Willoughby, Lord Wharton, and Sir John Trevor, one of the principal secretaries of state; who, though not members of Owen's church, were religiously disposed, and Owen's friends, and inclined, as far as their influence went, to mitigate the severities against the Nonconformists generally.[1]

Owen's intimacy with these noblemen probably accounts for that interview to which he was invited by the King and the Duke of York, and which has been faithfully chronicled by all his biographers. Happening to be at Tunbridge Wells when his majesty and the duke were also there, he was introduced to the royal tent. The king freely conversed with him on the subject of religious liberty, and expressed his wish to see the Dissenters relieved of their disabilities. On his return to London, he invited Owen to repeated interviews, uttering the same sentiments as he had done during the first conversation, and at length intrusted him with a thousand guineas, to be employed by him in mitigating the sufferings of his poorer brethren. The general policy of Charles sufficiently accounts for these gleams of royal sunshine.

But the importance of those friendships is not seen by us until we have marked the use which Owen made of them in the cause of his suffering brethren. It is well known that when the Parliament again assembled, it expressed its strong displeasure at the king's indulgence, and never ceased its remonstrances until the licences to places of worship had been withdrawn. A disposition, it is true, began to show itself to distinguish between the Protestant Nonconformists and the Romanists, and to point restriction more particularly against the latter; but the act, which was professedly intended to bear against *them* was so clumsily constructed as to be capable of reaching all who did not conform, and Churchmen were not slow in giving it this direction. The Nonconformists were exposed anew to the persecuting storm; informers were goaded by increased rewards; and among thousands of less illustrious sufferers, Richard Baxter suffered joyfully the spoiling of his goods, and was condemned to what his ardent spirit did indeed feel bitterly,—a year of almost unbroken silence.[2] Owen, however, appears to have been

[1] Asty, p. xxix. Noncon. Mem., i. 202.
[2] Jenkyn's Essay on Life of Baxter, p. xx.

left comparatively unmolested,—probably owing to the influences we have specified; and it is interesting to learn from an adversary with what zeal and constancy he employed his advantages to warn and succour the oppressed. "Witness his fishing out the king's counsels, and inquiring whether things went well to his great Diana, liberty of conscience?—how his majesty stood affected to it?—whether he would connive at it and the execution of the laws against it?—who were or could be made his friends at court?—what bills were like to be put up in Parliament?—how that assembly was united or divided? And according to the disposition of affairs he did acquaint his *under officers;* and they, by their letters each post, were to inform their fraternity in each corner of the kingdom how things were likely to go with them, how they should order their business, and either for a time omit or continue their conventicles."[1] Surely this was being able to find nothing against him, except as concerning the law of his God.

There was no sufferer in whose behalf Owen exerted his influence more earnestly than John Bunyan. It is well known that, as a preacher, Bunyan excited, wherever he went, an interest not surpassed even by the ministry of Baxter. When he preached in barns or on commons, he gathered eager thousands around him; and when he came to London, twelve hundred people would be found gathered together at seven on the dark morning of a winter working-day, to hear him expound the Word of God. Among these admiring multitudes Owen had often been discovered;—the most learned of the Puritans hung for hours, that seemed like moments, upon the lips of this untutored genius. The king is reported to have asked Owen, on one occasion, how a learned man like him could go "to hear a tinker prate;" to which the great theologian answered, "May it please your majesty, could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching, I would willingly relinquish all my learning."[2] For some years Bunyan's confinement in the prison of Bedford had, through the kindness of his good jailer, been attended with many mitigations; but towards the latter part of it, its severities had been greatly increased, and Owen used every effort to engage the interest of his old friend and tutor, Dr Barlow, for his release. Some of the details of this matter have been questioned by Southey, and its date is uncertain; but the leading facts seem above reasonable suspicion, and it is pleasing to know, that after some perplexing delay, Owen's interposition was successful in obtaining Bunyan's enlargement.[3]

During these chequered and anxious years, Owen's untiring pen

[1] Letter to a Friend, p. 34. Orme, p. 274.
[2] Hamilton's Life of Bunyan, p. xxix.
[3] Asty, p. xxx. Southey's Life of Bunyan, p. lxiv.

had been as active as ever. In 1669 he had published "A brief Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity; as also, of the Person and Satisfaction of Christ;" a little treatise, containing the condensed substance of his great controversial work against Biddle and the Continental Socinians,—the "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ." There was wisdom in thus supplying the church with a less controversial manual on those vital questions. Many of Owen's larger works remind us of some ancient castle, with its embrasures and port-holes, admirably fitting it for the purposes of defence, but in the same degree rendering it unsuitable as a peaceful habitation. In little more than forty years after Owen's death, this little work had passed through seven editions.[1] In 1672 he had published "A Discourse concerning Evangelical Love, Church Peace and Unity," etc.; a work combining enlarged and generous sentiment with wise discrimination, and in which Owen enters at great length into the question respecting the occasional attendance of Nonconformists on the parish churches,—a question which found him and Baxter once more ranged on opposite sides.

And there were other works whose origin dates from this period, in which we can trace the faithful watchman, anxiously descrying the coming danger, or seeking to rear bulwarks against the already swelling tide. Two of these were precious fragments broken off from his great work on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and enlarged to meet present exigencies. The first was his "Treatise on the Sabbath;" in which he joined with Baxter, and all the other great writers among the Puritans, in seeking to preserve this precious fence, which the goodness of God has drawn around the vineyard of his church, and which he found assailed on the one hand by fanatics, who denounced it as a mere ceremonial and carnal observance, and by the more numerous and noisy disciples of the "Book of Sports," who hated it for its spirituality. The reader will be struck with the contrast between the Puritan Sabbath, as it is depicted in its staid and solemn cheerfulness by a Puritan divine, and as he often beholds it caricatured by the modern popular writer; and as he finds Owen arguing with the same classes of antagonists, and answering the same arguments and objections as are rife at the present day, he will be disposed to subscribe to the theory, that errors have their orbits in which they move, and that their return may be calculated at a given juncture. The other work of this class to which we refer was, "The Nature and Punishment of Apostasy Declared, in an Exposition of Hebrews vi. 4–6."[2] It was emphatically a book for the times; when the multi-

[1] Anon. Mem., p. xxix.

[2] It is remarkable that in this treatise, p. 72–100, is to be found an explication of the last clause of the 6th verse of the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is strangely omitted in all editions of the "Exposition." The author has had

tudes who had merely played a part in religion in Cromwell's days had long since thrown off the mask, and taken amends for their restraints in the most shameless excesses; when to be sternly moral was almost to incur the suspicion of disloyalty; when to be called a Puritan was, with many, more discreditable than to be called a debauchee; and when the noon-day licentiousness of Charles' court, descending through the inferior ranks of life, carried every thing before it but what was rooted and grounded in a living piety.[1]

But the greatest work of Owen at this period was one which we leave its elaborate title to describe,—"A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit; in which an account is given of his name, nature, personality, dispensation, operations, and effects. His whole work in the Old and New Creation is explained; the doctrine concerning it vindicated from opposition and reproaches. The nature and necessity also of Gospel holiness, the difference between grace and morality, or a spiritual life to God in evangelical obedience and a course of moral virtues, is stated and explained." The better part of two centuries have elapsed since this work of Owen's was given to the world, and yet no English work on the same vital subject has approached it in exhaustive fulness.[2] Wilberforce owns his obligations to it as one of his great theological text-books; and Cecil declares that it had been to him "a treasure-house" of divinity.[3] It was not merely the two common extremes of error that Owen grappled with in this masterly treatise,—that of the enthusiasts who talked of the inward light and of secret revelations, and that of the Socinians who did not believe that there was any Holy Ghost, and of whose scanty creed it has been severely said, that it is not likely often to become the faith of men of genius. There was a third class of writers at that time, from whom Owen apprehended more danger than either,—men who, in their preaching, dwelt much upon the credentials of the Bible, but little upon its truths,—who would have defended even the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as an article of their creed, and at the same time would have derided all reference to the actual work of divine grace upon a human heart as the "weak imagination of distempered minds." Much of Owen's treatise has reference to these accommodating and courtly divines, and is, in fact, a vindication of the reality of the spiritual life. He is not always able to repress his satire against these writers. Some of them had complained that they were reproached as "rational

this fact pointed out to him by his learned and venerated colleague, Dr Brown of Edinburgh.

[1] Burnet's Own Times, i. 262–264.

[2] An excellent posthumous work on the Holy Spirit, by the late Dr Jamieson of Edinburgh, edited with memoir by the Rev. Andrew Sommerville, deserves to be better known. It displays more than one of the best qualities of Owen.

[3] Cecil's Works, ii. 514—Remains.

divines;" to which he replied, that if they were so reproached, it was, so far as he could discern, as Jerome was beaten by an angel for being a Ciceronian (in the judgment of some), very undeservedly.[1]

Few glimpses are given us of Owen's domestic history; but it appears that, in January 1676, he was bereaved of his first wife. One of his early biographers says that she "was an excellent and comely person, very affectionate towards him, and met with suitable returns."[2] He remained a widower for about eighteen months, when he married a lady of the name of Michel, the daughter of a family of rank in Dorsetshire, and the widow of Thomas D'Oyley, Esq. of Chiselhampton, near Stadham. This lady brought Dr Owen a considerable fortune; which, with his own property, and a legacy that was left him about the same time by his cousin, Martyn Owen, made his condition easy, and even affluent, so that he was able to keep a carriage during his remaining years. On all which Anthony Wood remarks, with monkish spite, that "Owen took all occasions to enjoy the comfortable importances of this life."[3]

Many symptoms were now beginning to make it evident that Owen's public career was drawing to a close. The excitements and anxieties of a most eventful life, and the fatigues of severe study, were making themselves visible in more than one disease. Asthma afflicted him with such severity as often to unfit him for preaching; and stone, the frequent and agonizing disease of studious men in those times, gave no uncertain signs of its presence. In these circumstances it became necessary to obtain assistants, both in the pastorate of the church in Leadenhall street, and also to act as his amanuenses

[1] Address to the readers, p. xli. The whole of Owen's comprehensive plan, however, was not completed in this central treatise. New treatises continued to appear at intervals, giving to some important branch of his subject a more full discussion. In 1677 appeared "The Reason of Faith; or, an answer to the inquiry, Wherefore we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God?" In 1678, "The Causes, Ways and Means of Understanding the Mind of God as Revealed in his Word; and a declaration of the perspicuity of the Scriptures, with the external means of the interpretation of them." In 1682, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer; with a brief inquiry into the nature and use of mental prayers and forms." At length, in 1693, two posthumous discourses, "On the Work of the Spirit as a Comforter, and as he is the Author of Spiritual Gifts," filled up Owen's elaborate outlines.—Orme, p. 293.

[2] Anon. Mem., p. xxxiv. Her epitaph by Mr Gilbert helps to fill up the portrait:—

"Prima ætatis virilis consors Maria,
Rei domesticæ perite studiosa,
Rebus Dei domus se totum addicendi;
Copiam illi fecit gratissimam."

There is a touching passage in a small work, remarkably well written, but little known, that leads us to think of Owen as an unusually tried parent. "His exercises by affliction were very great in respect of his children, none of whom he much enjoyed while living, and saw them all go off the stage before him."—Vindication of Owen by a friendly Scrutiny into the merits and manner of Mr Baxter's opposition to Twelve Arguments concerning Worship by the Liturgy, p. 38.

[3] Wood's Athen. Oxon., iv. 100, 101.

in preparing his remaining works for the press. Among those who, for brief periods, were thus connected with him, we meet with the names of two persons of rather remarkable history,—Robert Ferguson, who, beginning his life as a minister, became at length a political intriguer and pamphleteer, and, after undertaking some perilous adventures in the cause of William, ultimately became a Jacobite, and ended his eccentric and agitated course with more of notoriety than of honour; and Alexander Shields, a Scotchman, whose antipathy to Prelacy was surpassed by his piety, and whose name Scottish Presbyterians still venerate as the author of the "Hind let Loose."[1] These two probably laboured with Owen principally in the capacity of amanuenses; but the amiable and excellent David Clarkson shared with him the duties of the pastorate, and rejoiced to divide the anxieties and toils, and soothe the declining years, of the illustrious Puritan. Clarkson evidently won the generous admiration of Baxter; and Dr Bates beautifully spoke of him as "a real saint, in whom the living spring of grace in his heart diffused itself in the veins of his conversation. His life was a silent repetition of his holy discourses."[2]

With the help of his amanuenses, Owen completed and published, in 1677, "The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated,"—a work in which all the ratiocinative strength and command of resources of his best controversial days appear undiminished. We concur, indeed, to a certain extent, in the censure which has been charged against that part of it which treats of the nature of justifying faith, as tending to perplex a subject whose very simplicity makes explanation equally impossible and unnecessary. The censure, however, ought not to be confined to Owen; for on the subject of faith the Puritan divines, with their scholastic distinctions, were far inferior to the theologians of the Reformation. The great difficulty about faith is not a metaphysical but a moral one; and there is truth in the observation, that elaborate attempts to describe it are like handling a beautiful transparency, whose lustre disappears whensoever it is touched.

This great work was probably the ripened fruit of many years of thought. But as we examine the productions of Owen during the few remaining years of his life, it is easy to discover that they belonged principally to three classes, and two of those classes, especially, owed their origin to events that were occurring around him, and to dangerous tendencies which his ever-vigilant eye was quick to discover. First, there were his various writings against Popery, such as his

[1] Orme, 301. Burnet sketches the character of Ferguson with his usual bold distinctness: "He was a hot and bold man, whose spirit was naturally turned to plotting," etc.—Own Times, i. 542.

[2] Funeral Sermon by Dr Bates, on John xiv. 2, "In my Father's house are many mansions," &c.—Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, part iii. p. 97.

"Church of Rome no Safe Guide;" his "Brief and Impartial Account of the Protestant Religion;" and, in some degree also, his "Humble Testimony to the Goodness of God in his Dealing with Sinful Churches and Nations." In all of these we hear the watchman answering, "What of the night?" He is alive to the sympathies of Charles and his court with Popery,—to the readiness of not a few in the Church of England to move in the direction of Rome,—to the avowed Romanism of the Duke of York, and his possible succession to the throne, —and to the dangers to religion, to liberty, and to every thing most dear to man, which these lowering evils portended. The wisdom and foresight of Dr Owen in many parts of these writings, which we now read in the light of subsequent events, strike us with surprise, often with admiration.

In addition to beholding the Protestants duly inspirited and alarmed on the subject of Popery, Owen longed to see all alienations and divisions among them dispelled, and the various parts of the great Protestant community so united and mutually confiding, as to be prepared to resist their common adversary. Not that he was the less convinced of the necessity and duty of separation from the Episcopal Church; for in a controversy with Stillingfleet, into which an ungenerous assault of that able Churchman drew him, he had produced one of his best defences of Nonconformity;[1] but he felt a growing desire, both to see the real differences between the various branches of the Nonconformist family reduced to their true magnitude, and, in spite of the differences that might, after all, remain, to behold them banded together in mutual confidence and united action. His work on "Union among Protestants" was written with this wise and generous design; and this, we are persuaded, was one of the chief ends contemplated by another work,—his "Inquiry into the Origin, Nature, Institution, Power, Order, and Communion of Evangelical Churches."[2] We are quite aware that some have represented this highly valuable treatise as a recantation of Dr Owen's views on church polity, and a return to those Presbyterian sentiments with which he had entered on his public life; but an examination of the treatise, we think, will make it evident that this was not in Owen's thoughts, and that his aim was rather to show how far he

[1] This was a bulky pamphlet, entitled, "A brief Vindication of Nonconformists from the Charge of Schism, as it was managed against them in a Sermon by Dr Stillingfleet." All the leading Nonconformists appear to have taken part in this controversy, from grave Howe to witty Alsop. Stillingfleet replied in a clever work on the "Unreasonableness of Separation;" against which Owen brought his heavy artillery to bear with desolating effect, in "An Answer to the 'Unreasonableness of Separation,' and a Defence of the 'Vindication of the Nonconformists from the Guilt of Schism.'"

[2] A second part of this treatise, "The True Nature of a Gospel Church, and its Government," was posthumous, and did not appear till 1689.

could come to meet the moderate Presbyterian, and to lay down a platform on which united action, in those times of trouble and of perils, which all division aggravated, could consistently take place. Accordingly we find him, while admirably describing the true nature of a Gospel church, as a society of professed believers, and refusing to any man or body of men "all power of legislation in or over the church," avowing it as his conviction, that "the order of the officers which was so early in the primitive church,—viz., of one pastor or bishop in one church, assisted in rule and all holy ministrations with many elders, teaching or ruling only,—does not so overthrow church order as to render its rule or discipline useless." And in reference to the communion of churches, while repudiating every thing like authoritative interference and dictation on the part of any church or assembly of rulers, he holds that "no church is so independent that it can always, and in all cases, observe the duties it owes to the Lord Christ and the church catholic, by all those powers which it is able to act in itself distinctly, without conjunction of others; and the church which confines its duty to the acts of its own assemblies, cuts itself off from the external communion of the church catholic." He holds that "a synod convened in the name of Christ, by the voluntary consent of several churches concerned in mutual communion, may declare and determine of the mind of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, and decree the observation of things true and necessary, because revealed and appointed in the Scripture." And farther, that "if it be reported or known, by credible testimony, that any church hath admitted into the exercise of divine worship any thing superstitious or vain, or if the members of it walk, like those described by the apostle, Phil. iii. 18, 19, unto the dishonour of the Gospel and of the ways of Christ, the church itself not endeavouring its own reformation and repentance, other churches walking in communion therewith, by virtue of their common interest in the glory of Christ and honour of the Gospel, after more private ways for its reduction, as opportunity and duty may suggest unto their elders, ought to assemble in a synod for advice, either as to the use of farther means for the recovery of such a church, or to withhold communion from it in case of obstinacy in its evil ways."[1] We do not attempt to measure the distance between these principles and the Presbyterianism of Owen's day, or the diminished distance between them and the modified Presbyterianism of our own; but we state them, with one of Owen's oldest biographers, as an evidence of his "healing temper in this matter;"[2] and we even

[1] The True Nature of a Gospel Church, etc., chap. xi.

[2] Anon. Mem., p. xxxiv. The same writer adds, in illustration of this healing temper, "I heard him say, before a person of quality and others, he could readily join with Presbytery as it was exercised in Scotland."

venture to suggest whether, at some future period of increased spirituality and external danger, they may not form the basis of a stable and honourable union among the two great evangelical sections of modern Nonconformists.

But besides the outward dangers to Protestantism, which made Owen so eager for union among its friends, we discover another and more interesting explanation still in the increased occupation of his mind with the great central truths of the Gospel, and his growing delight in them. The minor distinctions among Christians come to be seen by us in their modified proportions, when we have taken our place within the inner circle of those great truths which constitute the peculiar glory and power of Christianity; and this inner and more radiant circle formed more and more the home of Dr Owen's heart. This is evident from the three great doctrinal and devotional works which were produced by him at this period, and which we have yet to name.

First, there appeared his "Χριστολογία, or Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, God and man, with the infinite wisdom, love, and power of God in the constitution thereof. As also, of the grounds and reasons of his incarnation; the nature of his ministry in heaven; the present state of the church above thereon; and the use of his person in religion," etc. The root from which the whole discourse springs, is the memorable declaration of our Lord to Peter, Matt. xvi. 18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:"—a declaration in which Owen finds three great truths, whose illustration forms the substance of the volume;—that the person of Christ is the foundation of his church; that opposition will be made by the powers of earth and hell to the church, as built on the person of Christ; and that the church built on the person of Christ shall never be separated from it or destroyed. It is easy to see what a rich field of doctrinal statement, learned illustration, and devout reflection, is opened for Owen's mind in these themes; and he expatiates in it with all the delight of a mind accustomed to high and heavenly communion. It is pleasing to mark how he casts off the cumbrous armour of a sometimes too scholastic style, that had kept him down in some of his earlier treatises; and, rising from the simply didactic into the devotional, aims to catch joyful glimpses of the glory that is soon to be revealed.

Then followed his heart-searching, heart-inspiring treatise on "The Grace and Duty of being Spiritually-minded," first preached to his own heart, and then to a private congregation; and which reveals to us the almost untouched and untrodden eminences on which Owen walked in the last years of his pilgrimage,—eminences for reaching which,

it has been said by one of the humblest and holiest of men of our own times, "it would almost appear indispensable that the spiritual life should be nourished in solitude; and that, afar from the din, and the broil, and the tumult of ordinary life, the candidate for heaven should give himself up to the discipline of prayer and of constant watchfulness."[1]

The last production of Owen's pen was his "Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ."[2] It embodies the holy musings of his latest days, and in many parts of it seems actually to echo the praises of the heavenly worshippers. We may apply to Owen's meditations, as recorded in this book, the words of Bunyan in reference to his pilgrim,—"Drawing near to the city, he had yet a more perfect view thereof." It is a striking circumstance, that each of the three great Puritan divines wrote a treatise on the subject of heaven, and that each had his own distinct aspect in which he delighted to view it. To the mind of Baxter, the most prominent idea of heaven was that of rest; and who can wonder, when it is remembered that his earthly life was little else than one prolonged disease?—to the mind of Howe, ever aspiring after a purer state of being, the favourite conception of heaven was that of holy happiness;—while to the mind of Owen, heaven's glory was regarded as consisting in the unveiled manifestation of Christ. The conceptions, though varied, are all true; and Christ, fully seen and perfectly enjoyed, will secure all the others. Let us now trace the few remaining steps that conducted Owen into the midst of this exceeding weight of glory.

We have already mentioned Lord Wharton, as one of those noblemen who continued their kindness to the Nonconformists in the midst of all their troubles. His country residence at Woburn, in Buckinghamshire, afforded a frequent asylum to the persecuted ministers; just as we find the castles of Mornay and De Plessis in France opened by their noble owners as a refuge to the Huguenots.

During his growing infirmities, Owen was invited to Woburn, to try the effect of change of air; and also that others of his persecuted brethren, meeting him in this safe retreat, might enjoy the benefit of united counsel and devotion. It appears that while here his infirmities increased upon him, and that he was unable to return to his flock in London at the time that he had hoped; and a letter written to them from this place, gives us so vivid a reflection of the anxieties of a period of persecution, and so interesting a specimen of Owen's fidelity and affection to his people, in the present experience

[1] Introductory Essay to Owen on Spiritual-mindedness, by Dr Chalmers, p. xxiv.

[2] "Weakness, weariness, and the near approaches of death, do call me off from any farther labour in this kind."—Preface to reader.

of suffering, and in the dread of more, that we have peculiar delight in interweaving it with our narrative :—

"Beloved in the Lord,—Mercy, grace, and peace be multiplied to you from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, by the communication of the Holy Ghost. I thought and hoped that by this time I might have been present with you, according to my desire and resolution; but it has pleased our holy, gracious Father otherwise to dispose of me, at least for a season. The continuance of my painful infirmities, and the increase of my weaknesses, will not allow me at present to hope that I should be able to bear the journey. How great an exercise this is to me, considering the season, he knows, to whose will I would in all things cheerfully submit myself. But although I am absent from you in body, I am in mind, affection, and spirit, present with you, and in your assemblies; for I hope you will be found my crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord; and my prayer for you night and day is, that you may stand fast in the whole will of God, and maintain the beginning of your confidence without wavering, firm unto the end. I know it is needless for me, at this distance, to write to you about what concerns you in point of duty at this season, that work being well supplied by my brother in the ministry; you will give me leave, out of my abundant affections towards you, to bring some few things to your remembrance, as my weakness will permit.

"In the first place, I pray God it may be rooted and fixed in our minds, that the shame and loss we may undergo for the sake of Christ and the profession of the Gospel is the greatest honour which in this life we can be made partakers of. So it was esteemed by the apostles,—they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake. It is a privilege superadded to the grace of faith, which all are not made partakers of. Hence it is reckoned to the Philippians in a peculiar manner, that it was given to them, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him,—that it is far more honourable to suffer with Christ than to reign with the greatest of his enemies. If this be fixed by faith in our minds, it will tend greatly to our encouragement. I mention these things only, as knowing that they are more at large pressed on you.

"The next thing I would recommend to you at this season, is the increase of mutual love among yourselves; for every trial of our faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is also a trial of our love towards the brethren. This is that which the Lord Christ expects from us,—namely, that when the hatred of the world doth openly manifest and act itself against us all, we should evidence an active love among ourselves. If there have been any decays, any coldness herein, if they are not recovered and healed in such a season, it can never be expected. I pray God, therefore, that your mutual love may abound more and more in all the effects and fruits of it towards the whole society, and every member thereof. You may justly measure the fruit of your present trial by the increase of this grace among you; in particular, have a due regard to the weak and the tempted,—that that which is lame may not be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed.

"Furthermore, brethren, I beseech you, hear a word of advice in case the persecution increases,—which it is like to do for a season. I could wish that, because you have no ruling elders, and your teachers cannot walk about publicly with safety, that you would appoint some among yourselves, who may continually, as their occasions will admit, go up and down, from house to house, and apply themselves peculiarly to the weak, the tempted, the fearful,—those that are ready to despond or to halt, and to encourage them in the Lord. Choose out those to this end who are endued with a spirit of courage and fortitude; and let them know that they are happy whom Christ will honour with this blessed work. And I desire the persons may be of this number who are faithful men, and know the state of the church; by this means you will know what is the frame of the members of the church,

which will be a great direction to you, even in your prayers. Watch, now, brethren, that, if it be the will of God, not one soul may be lost from under your care. Let no one be overlooked or neglected; consider all their conditions, and apply yourselves to all their circumstances.

Finally, brethren, that I be not at present farther troublesome to you, examine yourselves as to your spiritual benefit which you have received, or do receive, by your present fears and dangers, which will alone give you the true measure of your condition; for if this tends to the exercise of your faith, and love, and holiness, if this increases your valuation of the privileges of the Gospel, it will be an undoubted token of the blessed issue which the Lord Christ will give unto your troubles. Pray for me, as you do; and do it the rather, that, if it be the will of God, I may be restored to you,—and if not, that a blessed entrance may be given to me into the kingdom of God and glory. Salute all the church in my name. I take the boldness in the Lord to subscribe myself your unworthy pastor, and your servant for Jesus' sake, J. Owen."

"P.S.—I humbly desire you would in your prayers remember the family where I am, from whom I have received, and do receive, great Christian kindness. I may say, as the apostle of Onesiphorus, 'The Lord give to them that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day, for they have often refreshed me in my great distress."

His infirmities increasing, he soon after removed from London to Kensington, for country air; occasionally, however, he was able still to visit London; and an incident which happened to him on one of these visits presents us with another picture of the times. As he was driving along the Strand, his carriage was stopped by two informers, and his horses seized. Greater violence would immediately have followed, had it not been that Sir Edmund Godfrey, a justice of the peace, was passing at the time, and seeing a mob collected round the carriage, asked what was the matter? On ascertaining the circumstances, he ordered the informers, with Dr Owen, to meet him at the house of another justice of the peace on an appointed day. When the day came, it was found that the informers had acted so irregularly, that they were not only disappointed of their base reward, but severely reprimanded and dismissed. Thus once more did Owen escape as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Retiring still farther from the scenes of public life, Owen soon after took up his abode in the quiet village of Ealing, where he had a house of his own and some property. Only once again did persecution hover over him, and threaten to disturb the sacredness of his declining days, by seeking to involve him and some other of the Nonconformists in the Rye House plot; but the charge was too bold to be believed, and God was about, ere long, to remove him from the reach of all these evils, and to hide him in his pavilion, from the pride of man and from the strife of tongues. Anthony Wood has said of Owen, that "he did very unwillingly lay down his head and die;" but how different was the spectacle of moral sublimity presented to the eyes of those who were actual witnesses of the last days of the mag-

nanimous and heavenly-minded Puritan! In one of his latest writings, when referring to the near approach of the daily expected and earnestly desired hour of his discharge from all farther service in this world, he had said, "In the continual prospect hereof do I yet live, and rejoice; which, among other advantages unspeakable, hath already given me an inconcernment in those oppositions which the passions or interests of men engage them in, of a very near alliance unto, and scarce distinguishable from, that which the grave will afford." And all the exercises of his death-bed were the prolonged and brightening experience of what he here describes. In a letter to his beloved friend Charles Fleetwood, on the day before his death, he thus beautifully expresses his Christian affection, and his good hope through grace:—

"Dear Sir,—Although I am not able to write one word myself, yet I am very desirous to speak one word more to you in this world, and do it by the hand of my wife. The continuance of your entire kindness, knowing what it is accompanied withal, is not only greatly valued by me, but will be a refreshment to me, as it is, even in my dying hour. I am going to Him whom my soul has loved, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love,—which is the whole ground of all my consolation. The passage is very irksome and wearisome, through strong pains of various sorts, which are all issued in an intermitting fever. All things were provided to carry me to London to-day, according to the advice of my physicians; but we are all disappointed by my utter disability to undertake the journey. I am leaving the ship of the church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable. Live, and pray, and hope, and wait patiently, and do not despond; the promise stands invincible, that He will never leave us, nor forsake us. I am greatly afflicted at the distempers of your dear lady; the good Lord stand by her, and support and deliver her. My affectionate respects to her, and the rest of your relations, who are so dear to me in the Lord. Remember your dying friend with all fervency. I rest upon it that you do so, and am yours entirely, J. Owen."

The first sheet of his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ" had passed through the press under the superintendence of the Rev. William Payne, a Dissenting minister at Saffron Waldon, in Essex; and on that person calling on him to inform him of the circumstance on the morning of the day he died, he exclaimed, with uplifted hands, and eyes looking upward, "I am glad to hear it; but, O brother Payne! the long wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing, in this world."[1] Still it was no easy thing for that robust frame to be broken to pieces, and to let the struggling spirit go free. His physicians, Dr Cox and Sir Edmund King, remarked on the unusual strength of that earthly house which was about to be dissolved; while his more constant attendants on that consecrated hour were awe-struck by the mastery which his mighty and heaven-supported spirit maintained over his physical agonies. "In respect of

[1] Middleton, iii. 480.

sicknesses, very long, languishing, and often sharp and violent, like the blows of inevitable death, yet was he both calm and submiss under all."[1] At length the struggle ceased; and with eyes and hands uplifted, as if his last act was devotion, the spirit of Owen passed in silence into the world of glory. It happened on the 24th of August 1683, the anniversary of St Bartholomew's Day;—a day memorable in the annals of the Church of Christ, as that in which the two thousand Nonconformist confessors had exposed themselves to poverty and persecution at the call of conscience, and in which heaven's gates had been opened wide to receive the martyred Protestants of France. Eleven days afterwards, a long and mournful procession, composed of more than sixty noblemen, in carriages drawn by six horses each, and of many others in mourning coaches and on horse-back, silently followed the mortal remains of Owen along the streets of London, and deposited them in Bunhill-fields,—the Puritan necropolis.[2]

"We have had a light in this candlestick," said the amiable David Clarkson, on the Sabbath following; "we have had a light in this candlestick, which did not only enlighten the room, but gave light to others far and near: but it is put out. We did not sufficiently value it. I wish I might not say that our sins have put it out. We had a special honour and ornament, such as other churches would much prize; but the crown has fallen from our heads,—yea, may I not add, 'Woe unto us, for we have sinned?'"[3]

Dr Owen had only reached the confines of old age when he died; but the wonder is, that a life of such continuous action and severe study had not sooner burned out the lamp. It may be remarked of him, as Andrew Fuller used to say of himself, that "he possessed a large portion of being." He is said to have stooped considerably during the later years of his life; but when in his full vigour, his person was tall and majestic, while there was a singular mixture of gravity and sweetness in the expression of his countenance. His manners were courteous; his familiar conversation, though never deficient in gravity, was pleasantly seasoned with wit; and he was admired by his friends for his remarkable command of temper under the most annoying provocations, and his tranquil magnanimity in the midst of all the changes of fortune to which, in common with all his great Puritan contemporaries, he was exposed. "His general frame was serious, cheerful, and discoursive,—his expressions savouring nothing of discontent, much of heaven and love to Christ, and saints, and all men; which came from him so seriously and

[1] Vindication of Owen by a friendly Scrutiny, etc., p. 38.

[2] Stoughton's Spiritual Heroes.

[3] "Funeral Sermon on the most lamented death of the late reverend and learned John Owen, D.D., preached the next Lord's day after his interment." By David Clarkson, B.D.

spontaneously, as if grace and nature were in him reconciled, and but one thing."[1] Such is the portrait of Owen that has descended to us from those who best "knew his manner of life;" and our regret is all the greater, that we are constrained to receive the description in this general form, and that biography has opened to us so few of those glimpses of his domestic and social life which would have enabled us to "catch the living manners as they rose," and to fill up for ourselves the less strongly defined outlines of his character.

Our business, however, is more with Dr Owen in his various public relations, and it seems to be a fit conclusion of this Memoir, that we should now attempt, in a few closing paragraphs, to express the estimate which a review of his conduct in these relations warrants us to form of his character. One of the most natural errors into which a biographer is in danger of being betrayed, is that of asserting the superiority of the individual who has been the subject of his memoir to all his contemporaries; and it would probably require no great stretch of ingenuity or eloquent advocacy to bring out Dr Owen as at least "primus inter pares." In finding our way, however, to such conclusions, almost every thing depends on the particular excellence on which we fix as our standard of judgment; and we are persuaded that were we allowed to select a separate excellence in each case as our standard, we could bring out each of the three great Puritans as, in his turn, the greatest. Let impressive eloquence in the pulpit and ubiquitous activity out of it be the standard, and all this crowned with successes truly apostolical, and must not every preacher of his age yield the palm to Richard Baxter? Or let our task be to search for the man in that age of intellectual giants who was most at home in the *philosophy* of Christianity, whose imagination could bear every subject he touched upward into the sun-light, and cover it with the splendours of the firmament, and would we not lay the crown at the feet of the greatly good John Howe? But let the question be, Who among all the Puritans was the most remarkable for his intimate and profound acquaintance with the truths of revelation? who could shed the greatest amount of light upon a selected portion of the Word of God, discovering its hidden riches, unfolding its connections and harmonies, and bringing the most abstruse doctrines of revelation to bear upon the conduct and the life? who was the "interpreter, one amongst a thousand?" or let other excellencies that we are about to specify be chosen as the standard, and will not the name of Dr Owen, in this case, obtain an unhesitating and unanimous suffrage? Such a mode, therefore, of expressing our estimate is not only invidious, but almost certain to fail, after all, in conveying a distinct and accurate conception of the character we

[1] Vindication of Owen by a friendly Scrutiny, etc., p. 38.

commend. We prefer, therefore, to contemplate Dr Owen in his principal relations and most prominent mental features, and to paint a portrait without fashioning an idol.

The first excellence we have to name is one in regard to which, we are persuaded, the modern popular estimate has fallen considerably below the truth. We refer to the qualities of Owen as a preacher. No one who is familiar with his printed sermons, and has marked the rich ore of theology with which they abound, will refuse to him the praise of a great sermon-maker; but this gift is not always found united in the same person with that other excellence which is equally necessary to constitute the preacher,—the power, namely, of expressing all the sentiment and feeling contained in the words by means of the living voice. And the general impression seems to be, that Dr Owen was deficient in this quality, and that his involved sentences, though easily overlooked in a composition read in secret, must, without the accompaniments of a most perfect delivery, have been fatal to their effect upon a public audience. It is even supposed that his intellectual habits must have been unfavourable to his readiness as an orator, and that while, like Addison, he had abundance of gold in the bank, he was frequently at a loss for ready money. But Owen's contemporaries report far differently; and the admiring judgment of some of them is the more to be relied on, that, as in the case of Anthony Wood, it was given with a grudge. Their descriptions, indeed, would lead us to conclude that his eloquence was of the persuasive and insinuating, rather than, like Baxter's, of the impassioned kind,—the dew, and not the tempest; but in this form of eloquence he appears to have reached great success. His amiable colleague, Mr Clarkson, speaking of "the admirable facility with which he could discourse on any subject," describes him as "never at a loss for language, and better expressing himself extempore than others with premeditation;" and retaining this felicity of diction and mastery of his thoughts "in the presence even of the highest persons in the nation." We have already had occasion to quote Wood's representation of Owen's oratory, as "moving and winding the affections of his auditory almost as he pleased;"[1] and a writer of great judgment and discrimination, who had often heard Owen preach, speaks of him as "so great an ornament to the pulpit, that, for matter, manner, and efficacy on the hearers, he represented indeed an ambassador of the Most High, a teacher of the oracles of God. His person and deportment were so genteel and graceful, that rendered him when present as affecting, or more than his works and fame when absent. This advanced the lustre of his internal excellencies, by shining through so bright a lantern."

[1] The words seem to be Dodwell's, but they are quoted by Wood with approval.

Indeed, the sermons of Owen and his compeers, not only compel us to form a high estimate of the preachers, but of the hearers of those times, who could relish such strong meat, and invite its repetition. And seldom perhaps on earth has a preacher been called to address more select audiences than Owen. We do not now refer to the crowding multitudes that hailed his early ministry at Fordham and Coggeshall, or to those little secret audiences meeting in upper chambers, to whom truth was whispered rather than proclaimed, but to those high intellects that were wont to assemble around him at Oxford, and to those helmed warriors and heroes of the Commonwealth, who, on days of public fasting and thanksgiving, or on high occasions of state, would stand in groups to hear the great Puritan discourse. Many of these earnest souls were no sciolists in divinity themselves, and had first drawn their swords to secure the liberty of prophesying and uncontrolled freedom of worship.

We should form a very imperfect estimate of the character of Dr Owen, and of the beneficent influence which he exerted, did we not advert to his greatness as a man of affairs. In this respect we need have no hesitation in asserting his superiority to all the Puritans. Attached from principle to that great party whose noble mission it was to assert and to vindicate the rights of conscience and freedom of worship, he soon rose to be its chief adviser on all occasions of great practical exigency. He combined in a remarkable degree that clear perception and firm grasp of great abstract principles, that quick discernment of character and detection of hidden motive in others, which acts in some men with all the promptitude and infallibility of instinct,—that fertility of resources, that knowledge of the times for vigorous action and of the times in which to economize strength, which, when found in great prominence and happy combination in the politician, fit him for the high duties of statesmanship. He was the man who, by common consent, was called to the helm in a storm. Baxter was deficient in more than one of those qualities which are necessary to such a post; while his ardent nature would, on some occasions, have betrayed him into practical excesses, and at other times his love of nice and subtle distinction would have kept him discussing when he should have been acting;—while Howe's elevation above the affairs of daily life, his love of solitude, which made him almost wish even to die alone in some unfrequented wood, or on the top of some far remote mountain, disinclined, if it did not unfit him, for the conduct of public affairs. But Owen's singular excellence in this respect was early manifested,—and to no eye sooner than to that of Cromwell. We have seen him inviting his counsels on the affairs of Dublin University; taking him with him to Scotland, not only as his chaplain, but as his adviser in the affairs of that campaign,

when he found it more difficult to manage its theologians than to conquer its armies; and at length intrusting to him the arduous and almost desperate enterprise of presiding over Oxford, and raising it from its ruins. And throughout more than thirty years of the long struggle of the Puritans and Nonconformists, he was the counsellor and presiding mind, to whom all looked in the hour of important action and overwhelming difficulty.

Some have accused Owen and other Nonconformists of his age as too political for their office. But who made them such? Was it not the men who were seeking to wrest from them their dearest civil rights, and to make it a crime to worship God according to their consciences? With such base ingenuity of reproach were the Huguenots of France accused of holding secret meetings, after they had been forbidden to meet in public. It was no small part of Owen's praise, that he saw and obeyed the necessity of his position; and that perhaps, of all the Puritans of his age, he was the most quick to "observe the signs of the times, and to know what Israel ought to do." This is the estimate we should be disposed to form from a simple retrospect of the facts of our narrative; but it appears to have been the judgment which some of the best of Owen's contemporaries were not slow to express. In that admirable letter to Baxter from which we have already quoted, referring more particularly to Owen's vice-chancellorship, the writer says, "And though his years, piety, principles, and strait discipline, with the interest he adhered to, affected many of the heads and students with contempt, envy, and enmity at the first; his personal worth, obliging deportment, and dexterity in affairs that concerned him in that station, so mastered all, that the university grew not only content with, but proud of such a vice-chancellor. And, indeed, such were his temper and accomplishments, that whatever station or sort of men his lot, choice, or interest, should place him in or among, it were no small wonder that he were not uppermost:—that was his proper sphere, which those with whom he was concerned generally courted him into, and few envied or corrived."[1]

But the aspect in which we most frequently think of Owen, and from which our highest estimate of him is formed, is that of a theological writer. Even the mere material bulk of his works fills us with surprise; and when we consider the intensely active life which Owen led, their production strikes us as almost incredible. In Russell's edition, together with the edition of his "Exposition" by Wright, his works fill no fewer than twenty-eight goodly octavo volumes, though we almost sympathize with the feeling that the folio form, in which many of them originally appeared, more fitly represents their intellectual stature. "Hew down the pyramids," says Sir James

[1] "Corrived" is an obsolete English word for "rivalled."

Stephen, with a feeling which every lover of the old divinity will understand,—"Hew down the pyramids into a range of streets! divide Niagara into a succession of water privileges!—but let not the spirits of the mighty dead be thus evoked from their majestic shrines to animate the dwarfish structures of our bookselling generation."

It is only, however, when we have acquired some considerable familiarity with the contents of these volumes, and when we remember that on almost every one of the great controversies,—such as the Arminian, the Socinian, the Popish, and the Episcopalian,—he has produced works which, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, are still regarded by unanimous consent as master-pieces on the themes on which they treat, that we feel unhesitating confidence in placing the name of Owen among the first names of that age of amazing intellectual achievement. In some of his controversies he had to do with men of inferior ability, of whom it might be said, as of some of Fuller's opponents, that "they scarcely served him for a breakfast;" but in other controversies, such as that with Goodwin on the perseverance of the saints, he was called to grapple with some of the best and most accomplished men of his age. But he never quailed before any opponent. More than one of his works put an end to the controversy by driving his adversaries to despair; and only once—viz., in his rash encounter with Walton—did he retire undeniably vanquished from the field. It is unnecessary to repeat observations that have been made in the narrative on Owen's various works; but this seems to be the place at which to indicate what seem to have been the most distinguishing qualities of Owen as a theological writer.

Perhaps no better word could be found to express one of the most striking characteristics of Owen, than that which Mackintosh has used to describe the writings of Bentham,—*exhaustiveness*. He goes through his subject "in the length thereof, and in the breadth thereof." It was his custom to read all the works that had been written on his particular subject,—especially the writings of opponents,—and then to pass deliberately from point to point of his theme, and bring the whole concentrated light of Scripture to bear upon its elucidation and establishment. He leaves nothing to be added by one who shall follow in the same path, not even little gleanings at the corners of the field.—We venture to describe another feature of Owen's works by the phrase, Theological conservatism. In an age remarkable for its intellectual excitement, which gave birth to all manner of extravagances in opinion, like the ocean in a storm, bringing to the surface monsters, and hydras, and chimeras dire, and then producing in due season a reaction into the shallows of Rationalism, Owen displayed no disposition to change. There is no writer in whose opinions throughout life there is more of consistency and unity. There is everywhere

visible strong intellect and profound thought; but it is intellect, not sporting itself with novelties, and expending itself in presumptuous speculation, but reasoning out and defending what apostles taught, and feeling that there is enough in this to fill an angel's grasp. Various causes combined to work out this quality in Owen, especially his profound reverence for the authority of Scripture, leading him to travel over its ample field, but restraining him from passing beyond it; the influence of the truth upon his own heart, as a living power writing its divine witness within him; and also his vast learning, which enabled him to trace opinions to their source, and to detect in that which the ignorant and half-learned looked upon as a dazzling discovery, the resurrection of an exploded error, whose only novelty was in its name.

Allied to this, and in part accounting for it, was what we would style the devout Calvinism of Owen's cast of thought. Baxter and he held substantially the same truths, their views, even when they seemed the most divergent, differing in form and complexion more than in substance; but still it is evident that the two great men had each his distinct and favourite standing-point. With Baxter, the initial thought was man in need of a great restorative system; and this led him outward and upward, from step to step of the Christian salvation. The initial thought with Owen was God in the past eternity devising a scheme of salvation through a Mediator; which he unfolded in its wondrous arrangements and provisions from age to age of the world, and whose glorious results were to continue to be enjoyed for ever and ever. This gave a comprehensiveness and an elevation to Owen's whole theology, and accounts in part for the fact that Baxter seems greatest when bearing upon the duties of the sinner, and calling him to repentance,—"now or never;" while Owen comes forth in his greatest strength when instructing and building up those who have already believed.

And this suggests another of his most remarkable excellencies,—the power, namely, of bringing the various doctrines of the Christian system, even the most abstruse, to bear, in the form of motive and consolation, upon the affections and active powers of our human nature. Great as Owen is when we see him as the gigantic polemic, putting forth his intellectual might in "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" we have not seen him in all his greatness until, in such practical works as his treatise on the "Mortification of Sin in Believers," he brings the truth into contact, not so much with the errors of the heretic, as with the corruption and deceitfulness of the human heart. Then we have hesitated which most to admire,—his intimate knowledge of the Word of God, or his profound acquaintance with the heart of man, or the skill with which he brings the

one into vigorous and healing action upon the other; while all his great qualities, as the expositor of the Scriptures, as the defender of the faith, as the profound theologian, and as the wise practical instructor, have seemed to manifest themselves at once in single and united greatness, in that noble intellectual pyramid, his "Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

Yet some of the excellencies that we have named stand closely connected with Owen's chief defect,—which is to be found in his manner, rather than in his matter. His wish to exhaust his particular theme has made him say every thing on a subject that could be said, and betrayed him into an occasional prolixity and discursiveness, the absence of which would have made his works far more popular, and far more useful. He wants *perspective* in composition, and does not seem to know the secret of touching on themes, without laboriously handling them. This, with an occasionally involved and parenthetical style, has formed, as we conceive, the chief barrier to Owen's yet wider acceptance. The sentiment of Dr Vaughan is a just one, that had the fluency and elegance of Bates been united to the massive thoughts of Owen, we should have had a near approach to the perfect theological writer. But let us admit this occasional defect; and let us even farther concede, that in other qualities he is not equal to others of the Puritans,—that he is surpassed by Baxter in point and energy, by Flavel in tenderness, by Howe in majesty, by both the Henrys in proverb and epigram, by Bates in beautiful similitudes;—still, where shall we find, in the theological writers of his own or of any age, so much of the accumulated treasures of a sanctified learning,—of the mind of God clearly elucidated and invincibly defended,—of profound and massive thought? His works are like a soil which is literally impregnated with gold, and in which burnished masses of the virgin ore are sure to reward him who patiently labours in it.

John Owen belonged to a class of men who have risen from age to age in the church, to represent great principles, and to revive in the church the life of God. The supreme authority of the Scriptures in all matters of religion,—the headship of Christ,—the rights of conscience,—religion as a thing of spirit, and not of form, resulting from the personal belief of certain revealed truths, and infallibly manifesting itself in a holy life,—the church as a society distinct from the world;—these principles, often contended for in flames and blood, were the essence of that Puritanism which found one of its noblest examples in Owen. Puritanism, it has been finely said, was the feeling of which Protestantism was the argument. But even then, it was an old spirit under a new name, which, heaven-enkindled, has ever borne the two marks of its celestial origin, in blessing the world and

Die, à Terrenis Potestatibus, Plurimis faeto Fatali;
Illi, à Cœlesti Numine, Felici reddito;

Mensis Scilicet Augusti XXIV°. Anno à Partu Virgineo.
MDCLXXXIII°, Ætat. LXVII°.

TRANSLATION.

John Owen, D.D., born in the county of Oxford, the son of an eminent minister, himself more eminent, and worthy to be enrolled among the first divines of the age; furnished with human literature in all its kinds, and in its highest degrees, he called forth all his knowledge in an orderly train to serve the interests of religion, and minister in the sanctuary of his God. In divinity, practic, polemic, and casuistical, he excelled others, and was in all equal to himself. The *Arminian*, *Socinian*, and *Popish* errors, those *hydras*, whose contaminated breath and deadly poison infested the church, he, with more than *Herculean* labour, repulsed, vanquished, and destroyed. The whole economy of redeeming grace, revealed and applied by the Holy Spirit, he deeply investigated, and communicated to others, having first felt its divine energy, according to its draught in the holy Scriptures, transfused into his own bosom. Superior to all terrene pursuits, he constantly cherished, and largely experienced, that blissful communion with Deity he so admirably describes in his writings. While on the road to heaven, his elevated mind almost comprehended its full glories and joys. When he was consulted on cases of conscience, his resolutions contained the wisdom of an oracle. He was a scribe every way instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. In conversation he held up to *many*, in his public discourses to *more*, in his publications from the press to *all*, who were set out for the celestial *Zion*, the effulgent lamp of evangelical truth, to guide their steps to immortal glory. While he was thus diffusing his divine light, with his own inward sensations, and the observations of his afflicted friends, his earthly tabernacle gradually decayed, till at length his deeply-sanctified soul, longing for the fruition of its God, quitted the body. In younger age, a most comely and majestic form; but in the latter stages of life, depressed by constant infirmities, emaciated with frequent diseases, and above all crushed under the weight of intense and unremitting studies, it became an incommodious mansion for the vigorous exertions of the spirit in the service of its God. He left the world on a day dreadful to the church by the cruelties of men, but blissful to himself by the plaudits of his God, August 24, 1683, aged 67.—*Translated by Dr Gibbons.*

II.

The following Letters embrace all the Correspondence of Dr Owen which has been preserved, and is of any importance:—

TO M. DU MOULIN.

Sir,—I have received your strictures upon our Confession, wherein you charge it with palpable contradiction, nonsense, enthusiasm, and false doctrine,—that is, all the evils that can be crowded into such a writing; and I understand, by another letter since, that you have sent the same paper to others,—which is the sole cause of the return which I now make to you; and I beg your pardon in telling you, that

all your instances are your own mistakes, or the mistakes of your friend, as I shall briefly manifest to you.

First, you say there is a plain contradiction between chap. iii. art. 6, and chap. xxx. art. 2. In the first place it is said, "None but the elect are redeemed;" but in the other it is said, "The sacrament is a memorial of the one offering of Christ upon the cross for all." I do admire to find this charged by you as a contradiction; for you know full well that all our divines who maintain that the elect only were redeemed effectually by Christ, do yet grant that Christ died for all, in the Scripture sense of the word,—that is, some of all sorts,—and never dreamt of any contradiction in their assertion. But your mistake is worse; for in chap. xxx. art. 2, which you refer to, there is not one word mentioned of Christ's dying for all; but that the sacrifice which he offered was offered once for all,—which is the expression of the apostle, to intimate that it was but once offered, in opposition to the frequent repetitions of the sacrifices of the Jews. And pray, if you go on in your translation, do not fall into a mistake upon it; for in the very close of the article it is said, "That Christ's only sacrifice was a propitiation for the sins of all the elect." The words you urge out of 2 Pet. ii. 1, are not in the text: they are, by your quotation, "Denied him that had redeemed them;" but it is, "Denied the sovereign Lord which had bought them;"—which words have quite another sense.

Something you quote out of chap. vi. art. 6, where I think you suppose we do not distinguish between the "reatus" and "macula" of sin; and so think that we grant the defilement of Adam's person, and consequently of all intermediate propagations, to be imputed unto us. Pray, sir, give me leave to say, that I cannot but think your mind was employed about other things when you dreamt of our being guilty of such a folly and madness; neither is there any one word in the Confession which gives countenance unto it. If you would throw away so much time as to read any part of my late discourse about justification, it is not unlikely but that you would see something of the nature of the guilt of sin, and the imputation of it, which may give you satisfaction.

In your next instance, which you refer unto chap. xix. art. 3, by some mistake (there being nothing to the purpose in that place), you say, "It is presupposed that some who have attained age may be elected, and yet have not the knowledge of Jesus Christ; which is a pure enthusiasm, and is contrary to chap. xx. art. 2." Why, sir! that many who are eternally elected, and yet for some season—some less, some longer—do live without the knowledge of Christ, until they are converted by the Word and Spirit, is not an enthusiasm; but your exception is contrary to the whole Scripture, contrary to the experience of all days and ages, overthrows the work of the ministry, and is so absurd to sense, and reason, and daily experience, that I know not what to say to it; only, I confess that if, with some of the Arminians, you do not believe that any are elected from eternity, or before they do actually believe, something may be spoken to countenance your exception: but that we cannot regard, for it was our design to oppose all their errors.

Your next instance is a plain charge of false doctrine, taken out of chap. xi. art. 1, speaking, as you say, of the active obedience of Christ imputed to us, which is contrary to art. 3, where it is said that Christ acquits by his obedience in death, and not by his fulfilling of the law. Sir, you still give me cause of some new admiration in all these objections, and I fear you make use of some corrupt copy of our Confession;—for we say not, as you allege, that Christ by his obedience in death did acquit us, and not by his fulfilling of the law; but we say that Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those who are justified.—which comprehends both his active and passive righteousness. But you add a reason, whereby you design to disprove this doctrine of ours concerning the im-

putation of the active righteousness of Christ unto our justification. Why, you say, it is contrary to reason; for that we are freed from satisfying God's justice by being punished by death, but not from the fulfilling of the law: therefore the fulfilling of the law by Christ is no satisfaction for us,—we are not freed from active obedience, but from passive obedience. Pray, sir, do not mistake that such mistaken reasonings can give us any occasion to change our judgments in an article of truth of this importance. When you shall have been pleased to read my book of Justification, and have answered solidly what I have written upon this subject, I will tell you more of my mind. In the meantime I tell you, we are by the death of Christ freed from all sufferings as they are purely penal, and the effects of the curse, though they spring out of that root; only, sir, you and I know full well that we are not freed from pains, afflictions, and death itself,—which had never been, had they not proceeded from the curse of the law. And so, sir, by the obedience of Christ we are freed from obedience to the law, as to justification by the works thereof. We are no more obliged to obey the law in order to justification than we are obliged to undergo the penalties of the law to answer its curse. But these things have been fully debated elsewhere.

In the last place, your friend wishes it could be avoided, and declined to speak any thing about universal grace, for that it would raise some or most divines against it. I judge myself beholden to your friend for the advice, which I presume he judges to be good and wholesome; but I beg your pardon that I cannot comply with it, although I shall not reflect with any severity upon them who are of another judgment; and, to tell you the truth, the immethodical new method introduced to give countenance to universal grace, is, in my judgment, suited to draw us off from all due conceptions concerning the grace of God in Jesus Christ; which I shall not now stay to demonstrate, though I will not decline the undertaking of it, if God gives me strength, at any time. And I do wonder to hear you say that many, if not most divines, will rise against it, who have published in print that there were but two in England that were of that opinion, and have strenuously opposed it yourself. How things are in France, I know not; but at Geneva, in Holland, in Switzerland, in all the Protestant churches of Germany, I do know that this universal grace is exploded. Sir, I shall trouble you no farther. I pray be pleased to accept of my desire to undeceive you in those things, wherein either a corrupt copy of our Confession or the reasonings of other men have given you so many mistaken conceptions about our Confession.—I am, Sir, yours,

J. Owen.

TO THE LADY HARTOPP.

Dear Madam,—Every work of God is good; the Holy One in the midst of us will do no iniquity; and all things shall work together for good unto them that love him, even those things which at present are not joyous, but grievous; only his time is to be waited for, and his way submitted unto, that we seem not to be displeased in our hearts that he is Lord over us. Your dear infant is in the eternal enjoyment of the fruits of all our prayers; for the covenant of God is ordered in all things, and sure. We shall go to her; she shall not return to us. Happy she was in this above us, that she had so speedy an issue of sin and misery, being born only to exercise your faith and patience, and to glorify God's grace in her eternal blessedness. My trouble would be great on the account of my absence at this time from you both, but that this also is the Lord's doing; and I know my own uselessness wherever I am. But this I will beg of God for you both, that you may not faint in this day of trial,—that you may have a clear view of those spiritual

and temporal mercies wherewith you are yet intrusted (all undeserved),—that sorrow of the world may not so overtake your hearts as to disenable to any duties, to grieve the Spirit, to prejudice your lives; for it tends to death. God in Christ will be better to you than ten children, and will so preserve your remnant, and so add to them, as shall be for his glory and your comfort. Only consider that sorrow in this case is no duty; it is an effect of sin, whose cure by grace we should endeavour. Shall I say, Be cheerful? I know I may. God help you to honour grace and mercy in a compliance therewith. My heart is with you, my prayers shall be for you, and I am, dear madam, your most affectionate friend and unworthy pastor,

J. Owen.

TO MRS FOLHILL.

Dear Madam,—The trouble expressed in yours is a great addition to mine; the sovereignty of divine wisdom and grace is all that I have at this day to retreat unto; God direct you thereunto also, and you will find rest and peace. It adds to my trouble that I cannot possibly come down to you this week. Nothing but engaged duty could keep me from you one hour: yet I am conscious how little I can contribute to your guidance in this storm, or your satisfaction. Christ is your pilot; and however the vessel is tossed whilst he seems to sleep, he will arise and rebuke these winds and waves in his own time. I have done it, and yet shall farther wrestle with God for you, according to the strength he is pleased to communicate. Little it is which at this distance I can mind you of; yet some few things are necessary. Sorrow not too much for the dead; she is entered into rest, and is taken away from the evil to come. Take heed lest, by too much grief, you too much grieve that Holy Spirit, who is infinitely more to us than all natural relations. I blame you not that you so far attend to the call of God in this dispensation as to search yourself, to judge and condemn yourself: grace can make it an evidence to you that you shall not be judged or condemned of the Lord. I dare not say that this chastisement was not needful. We are not in heaviness unless need be; but if God be pleased to give you a discovery of the wisdom and care that is in it, and how needful it was to awaken and restore your soul in any thing, perhaps in many things, in due time you will see grace and love in it also. I verily believe God expects, in this dealing with you, that you should judge yourself, your sins and your decays; but he would not have you misjudge your condition. But we are like froward children, who, when they are rebuked and corrected, neglect other things, and only cry that their parents hate and reject them. You are apt to fear, to think and say, that you are one whom God regards not, who are none of his; and that for sundry reasons which you suppose you can plead. But, saith God, this is not the business; this is a part of your frowardness. I call you to quicken your grace, to amend your own ways; and you think you have nothing to do but to question my love. Pray, madam, my dear sister, child and care, beware you lose not the advantage of this dispensation; you will do so, if you use it only to afflictive sorrows, or questioning of the love of God, or your interest in Christ. The time will be spent in these things which should be taken up in earnest endeavours after a compliance with God's will, quickenings of grace, returns after backsliding, mortification of sin and love of the world, until the sense of it do pass away. Labour vigorously to bring your soul to this twofold resolution:—
1. That the will of God is the best rule for all things, and their circumstances;
2. That you will bring yourself into a fresh engagement to live more to him: and you will find the remainder of your work easy; for it is part of the yoke of Christ. I shall trouble you no farther, but only to give you the assurance that you are in

my heart continually, which is nothing; but it helps to persuade me that you are in the heart of Christ, which is all.—I am, dear madam, your very affectionate servant, J. Owen.

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD, ESQ.

Dear Sir,—I received yours, and am glad to hear of your welfare. There is more than ordinary mercy in every day's preservation. My wife, I bless God, is much revived, so that I do not despair of her recovery; but for myself, I have been under the power of various distempers for fourteen days past, and do yet so continue. God is fastening his instruction concerning the approach of that season wherein I must lay down this tabernacle. I think my mind has been too much intent upon some things, which I looked on as services for the church; but God will have us know that he has no need of me nor them, and is therefore calling me off from them. Help me with your prayers, that I may, through the riches of his grace in Christ, be in some measure ready for my account. The truth is, we cannot see the latter rain in its season, as we have seen the former, and a latter spring thereon. Death, that will turn in the streams of glory upon our poor withering souls, is the best relief. I begin to fear that we shall die in this wilderness; yet ought we to labour and pray continually that the heavens would drop down from above, and the skies pour down righteousness,—that the earth may open and bring forth salvation, and that righteousness may spring up together. If ever I return to you in this world, I beseech you to contend yet more earnestly than ever I have done, with God, with my own heart, with the church, to labour after spiritual revivals. Our affectionate service to your lady, and to all your family that are of the household of God.—I am, dearest sir, yours most affectionately whilst I live,

Stadham, *July* 8. J. Owen.

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD, ESQ.

Dear Sir,—The bearer has stayed long enough with us to save you the trouble of reading an account of me in my own scribbling: a longer stay I could not prevail with him for, though his company was a great refreshment to me. Both you and your whole family, in all their occasions and circumstances, are daily in my thoughts; and when I am enabled to pray, I make mention of you all without ceasing. I find you and I are much in complaining. For my part I must say, And is there not a cause? So much deadness, so much unspirituality, so much weakness in faith, coldness in love, instability in holy meditations, as I find in myself, is cause sufficient of complaints. But is there not cause also of thanksgiving and joy in the Lord? Are there not reasons for them? When I begin to think of them, I am overwhelmed; they are great, they are glorious, they are inexpressible. Shall I now invite you to this great duty of rejoicing more in the Lord? Pray for me, that I may do so; for the near approach of my dissolution calls for it earnestly. My heart has done with this world, even in the best and most desirable of its refreshments. If the joy of the Lord be not now strength unto it, it will fail. But I must have done. Unless God be pleased to affect some person or persons with a deep sense of our declining condition, of the temptations and dangers of the day, filling them with compassion for the souls of men, making them fervent in spirit in their work, it will go but ill with us. It may be these thoughts spring from causeless fears,—it may be none amongst us has an evil, a barren heart but myself: but bear with me in this my folly; I cannot lay down these thoughts until I die; nor do I mention them at present as though I should

not esteem it a great mercy to have so able a supply as Mr C., but I am groaning after deliverance; and being near the centre, do hope I feel the drawing of the love of Christ with more earnestness than formerly: but my naughty heart is backward in these compliances. My affectionate service to Sir John Hartopp, and his lady, and to the rest of your family, when God shall return them unto you.—I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately in everlasting bonds,

J. Owen.

TO THE REV. MR ROBERT ASTY OF NORWICH.

Dear Sir,—I received yours by Mr B., to whom I shall commit this return, and hope it will come safely to your hands; for although I can acknowledge nothing of what you are pleased out of your love to ascribe unto me, yet I shall be always ready to give you my thoughts in the way of brotherly advice, whenever you shall stand in need of it: and at present, as things are circumstanced, I do not see how you can waive or decline the call of the church, either in conscience or reputation. For, to begin with the latter; should you do so upon the most Christian and cogent grounds in your own apprehensions, yet wrong interpretations will be put upon it: and so far as it is possible we ought to keep ourselves, not only "extra noxam," but "suspicionem" also. But the point of conscience is of more moment. All things concurring,—the providence of God in bringing you to that place, the judgment of the church on your gifts and grace for their edification and example, the joint consent of the body of the congregation in your call, with present circumstances of a singular opportunity for preaching the word,—I confess at this distance I see not how you can discharge that duty you owe to Jesus Christ (whose you are, and not your own, and must rejoice to be what he will have you to be, be it more or less) in refusing a compliance unto these manifest indications of his pleasure; only, remember that you sit down and count what it will cost you,—which I know you will not be discouraged by; for the daily exercise of grace and learning of wisdom should not be grievous unto us, though some of their occasions may be irksome. For the latter part of your letter, I know no difference between a pastor and a teacher but what follows their different gifts;—the office is absolutely the same in both; the power the same, the right to the administration of all ordinances every way the same: and at that great church at Boston, in New England, the teacher was always the principal person; so was Mr Cotton and Mr Norton. Where gifts make a difference, there is a difference; otherwise there is none. I pray God guide you in this great affair; and I beg your prayers for myself in my weak, infirm condition.—I am your affectionate friend and brother,

J. Owen.

London, *March* 16.

TO MR BAXTER.

Sir,—The continuance of my cold, which yet holds me, with the severity of the weather, have hitherto hindered me from answering my purpose of coming unto you at Acton; but yet I hope, ere long, to obtain the advantage of enjoying your company there for a season. In the meantime, I return you my thanks for the communication of your papers; and shall on every occasion manifest that you have no occasion to question whether I were in earnest in what I proposed, in reference to the concord you design. For the desire of it is continually upon my heart; and to express that desire on all occasion, I esteem one part of that profession of the Gospel which I am called unto. Could I contribute any thing towards

the accomplishment of so holy, so necessary a work, I should willingly spend myself and be spent in it. For what you design concerning your present essay, I like it very well, both upon the reasons you mention in your letter, as also that all those who may be willing and desirous to promote so blessed a work may have copies by them, to prepare their thoughts in reference to the whole.

For the present, upon the liberty granted in your letter (if I remember it aright), I shall tender you a few queries, which, if they are useless or needless, deal with them accordingly.

As,—1. Are not the severals proposed or insisted on too many for this first attempt? The general heads, I conceive, are not; but under them very many particulars are not only included, which is unavoidable, but expressed also, which may too much dilate the original consideration of the whole.

2. You expressly exclude the Papists, who will also sure enough exclude themselves, and do, from any such agreement; but have you done the same as to the Socinians, who are numerous, and ready to include themselves upon our communion? The Creed, as expounded in the four first councils, will do it.

3. Whether some expressions suited to prevent future divisions and separations, after a concord is obtained, may not at present, to avoid all exasperation, be omitted, as seeming reflective on former actings, when there was no such agreement among us as is now aimed at?

4. Whether insisting in particular on the power of the magistrate, especially as under civil coercion and punishment in cases of error or heresy, be necessary in this first attempt? These generals occurred to my thoughts upon my first reading of your proposals. I will now read them again, and set down, as I pass on, such apprehensions in particular as I have of the severals of them.

To the first answer, under the first question, I assent; so also to the first proposal, and the explanation; likewise to the second and third. I thought to have proceeded thus throughout, but I foresee my so doing would be tedious and useless; I shall therefore mention only what at present may seem to require second thoughts. As,—

1. To propos. 9, by those instances [what words to use in preaching, in what words to pray, in what decent habit] do you intend homilies, prescribed forms of prayer, and habits superadded to those of vulgar decent use? Present controversies will suggest an especial sense under general expressions.

2. Under pos. 13, do you think a man may not leave a church and join himself to another, unless it be for such a cause or reason as he supposeth sufficient to destroy the being of the church? I meet with this now answered in your 18th propos., and so shall forbear farther particular remarks, and pass on.

In your answer to the second question, your 10th position hath in it somewhat that will admit of farther consideration, as I think. In your answer to the third question, have you sufficiently expressed the accountableness of churches mutually, in case of offence from maladministration and church censures? This also I now see in part answered,—proposition fifth. I shall forbear to add any thing as under your answer to the last question, about the power of the magistrate, because I fear that in that matter of punishing I shall somewhat dissent from you, though as to mere coercion I shall in some cases agree.

Upon the whole matter, I judge your proposals worthy of great consideration, and the most probable medium for the attaining of the end aimed at that yet I have perused. If God give not a heart and mind to desire peace and union, every expression will be disputed, under pretence of truth and accuracy; but if these things have a place in us answerable to that which they enjoy in the Gospel, I see no reason why all the true disciples of Christ might not, upon these and the like principles, condescend in love unto the practical concord and agreement, which

not one of them dare deny to be their duty to aim at. Sir, I shall pray that the Lord would guide and prosper you in all studies and endeavours for the service of Christ in the world, especially in this your desire and study for the introducing of the peace and love promised amongst them that believe, and do beg your prayers. —Your truly affectionate brother, and unworthy fellow-servant,

Jan. 25, 1668. JOHN OWEN.

III.

A List of DR OWEN'S WORKS, according to the years in which they appear to have been published.

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ΧΡΙΣΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ:

OR,

A DECLARATION OF THE GLORIOUS MYSTERY

OF

THE PERSON OF CHRIST—GOD AND MAN:

WITH

THE INFINITE WISDOM, LOVE, AND POWER OF GOD IN THE CONTRIVANCE AND CONSTITUTION THEREOF;

AS ALSO,

OF THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF HIS INCARNATION;
THE NATURE OF HIS MINISTRY IN HEAVEN;
THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH ABOVE THEREON; AND
THE USE OF HIS PERSON IN RELIGION:

WITH

AN ACCOUNT AND VINDICATION OF THE
HONOUR, WORSHIP, FAITH, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE DUE UNTO HIM,
IN AND FROM THE CHURCH.

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."—PHIL. iii. 8.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The object of Dr Owen in this treatise is to illustrate the mystery of divine grace in the person of Christ. It bears the title, "Christologia;" but it differs considerably from modern works of the same title or character. It is not occupied with a formal induction from Scripture in proof of the supreme Godhead of the Saviour. Owen assumes the truth of this doctrine, and applies all his powers and resources to expound its relations in the Christian system, and its bearings on Christian duty and experience.

Chapter I. of the work is devoted to an exposition of Matt. xvi. 16, as a warrant and basis for his inquiry respecting the person of Christ. Chapter II. contains some historical references to the opposition encountered by this doctrine in past ages. From Chapter III. to VII. inclusive, the person of Christ is exhibited as the origin of all true religion, the foundation of the divine counsels, the representation of the divine nature and will, the embodiment and sum of divine truth, and the source of divine and gracious efficacy for the salvation of the church. The faith of the Old Testament Church respecting it is illustrated in Chapter VIII. Then follows the second leading division of the treatise, in which the divine honours and obedience due to Christ, and our obligation to seek conformity to him, are urged at some length, from Chapter IX. to XV. It is followed in Chapters XVI. and XVII. with an inquiry into the divine wisdom as manifested in the person of Christ. The hypostatical union is explained, Chapter XVIII. Two more Chapters, XIX. and XX., close the work, with a dissertation on the exaltation of Christ, and the mode in which he discharges his mediatorial functions in heaven.

The treatise was first published in 1679. We are not informed under what particular circumstances Owen was led to prepare it. There is internal evidence in the work itself that he laboured under a strong impression of the peril in which evangelical religion would be involved, if views of the person of Christ, either positively unsound or simply vague and defective, obtained currency in the British churches. His acquaintance with the early history of the church taught him that against this doctrine the persevering assaults of Satan had been directed; and, with sagacious foresight, he anticipated the rise of heresy on this point in England. He speaks of "woful contests" respecting it,—increasing rather than abating "unto this very day;" and intimates his conviction, in language which elucidates his main design in this work, that the only way by which they could be terminated was to enthrone Christ anew in the hearts and consciences of men.

Events ensued which justified these apprehensions of Owen. A prolonged controversy on the subject of the Trinity arose, which drew forth the works of Bull (1685), Sherlock (1690), and South (1695). In 1710, Whiston was expelled from Oxford for his Arianism. Dr S. Clarke, in 1712, published Arian views, for which he was summoned before the Convocation. Among the Presbyterian Dissenters, Pierce and Hallet (1717) became openly committed to Arianism. Dr Isaac Watts, who succeeded (1702) to the charge of the same congregation in London which had been under the care of Owen, broached the *Indwelling Scheme;* according to which the Father is so united to the man Christ Jesus, whose human soul pre-existed his coming in the flesh, that, through this indwelling of the Godhead, he became properly God.

The Christology of Owen has always been highly valued, and will be of use to all ages of the church:—"A work," says the late Dr M'Crie, "which, together with its continuation, the 'Meditations on the Glory of Christ,' of all the theological works published by individuals since the Reformation, next to 'Calvin's Institutions,' we would have deemed it our highest honour to have produced."—Ed.

THE PREFACE.

It is a great promise concerning the person of Christ, as he was to be given unto the church, (for he was a child born, a son given unto us, Isa. ix. 6,) that God would "lay him in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation," whereon "he that believeth shall not make haste:" Isa. xxviii. 16. Yet was it also foretold concerning him, that this precious foundation should be "for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;" so as that "many among them should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken:" Isa. viii. 14, 15. According unto this promise and prediction it hath fallen out in all ages of the church; as the apostle Peter declares concerning the first of them. "Wherefore also," saith he, "it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed:" 1 Pet. ii. 6–8.

Unto them that believe unto the saving of the soul, he is, he always hath been, precious—the sun, the rock, the life, the bread of their souls—every thing that is good, useful, amiable, desirable, here or unto eternity. In, from, and by him, is all their spiritual and eternal life, light, power, growth, consolation, and joy here; with everlasting salvation hereafter. By him alone do they desire, expect, and obtain deliverance from that woful apostasy from God, which is accompanied with—which containeth in it virtually and meritoriously —whatever is evil, noxious, and destructive unto our nature, and which, without relief, will issue in eternal misery. By him are they brought into the nearest cognation, alliance, and friendship with God, the firmest union unto him, and the most holy communion with him, that our finite natures are capable of, and so conducted unto the eternal enjoyment of him. For in him "shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;" (Isa. xlv. 25;) for "Israel shall be

saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation;" they "shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end:" verse 17.

On these and the like accounts, the principal design of their whole lives unto whom he is thus precious, is to acquaint themselves with him—the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God, in his person and mediation, as revealed unto us in the Scripture, which is "life eternal;" (John xvii. 3 ;)—to trust in him, and unto him, as to all the everlasting concernments of their souls—to love and honour him with all their hearts—to endeavour after conformity to him, in all those characters of divine goodness and holiness which are represented unto them in him. In these things consist the soul, life, power, beauty, and efficacy of the Christian religion; without which, whatever outward ornaments may be put upon its exercise, it is but a useless, lifeless carcass. The whole of this design is expressed in these heavenly words of the apostle: (Phil. iii. 8–12 :) "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." This is a divine expression of that frame of heart—of that design—which is predominant and efficacious in them unto whom Christ is precious.

But, on the other hand, (according unto the fore-mentioned prediction,) as he hath been a sure foundation unto all that believe, so he hath in like manner been " a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence unto them that stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." There is nothing in him—nothing wherein he is concerned—nothing of him, his person, his natures, his office, his grace, his love, his power, his authority, his relation unto the church—but it hath been unto many a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Concerning these things have been all the woful contests which have fallen out and been managed among those that outwardly have made profession of the Christian religion. And the contentions about them do rather increase than abate, unto this very day; the dismal fruits whereof the world groaneth under, and is no longer able to bear. For, as the opposition unto the Lord Christ in these things, by men of perverse minds, hath ruined their own souls—as having dashed themselves in pieces

against this everlasting rock—so in conjunction with other lusts and interests of the carnal minds of men, it hath filled the world itself with blood and confusion.

The re-enthroning of the Person, Spirit, Grace, and Authority of Christ, in the hearts and consciences of men, is the only way whereby an end may be put unto these woful conflicts. But this is not to be expected in any degree of perfection amongst them who stumble at this stone of offence, whereunto they were appointed; though in the issue he will herein also send forth judgment unto victory, and all the meek of the earth shall follow after it. In the meantime, as those unto whom he is thus a rock of offence—in his person, his spirit, his grace, his office, and authority—are diligent and restless (in their various ways and forms, in lesser or higher degrees, in secret artifices, or open contradictions unto any or all of them, under various pretences, and for divers ends, even secular advantages some of them, which the craft of Satan hath prepared for the ensnaring of them) in all ways of opposition unto his glory; so it is the highest duty of them unto whom he is precious, whose principal design is to be found built on him as the sure foundation, as to hold the truth concerning him, (his person, spirit, grace, office, and authority,) and to abound in all duties of faith, love, trust, honour, and delight in him—so also to declare his excellency, to plead the cause of his glory, to vindicate his honour, and to witness him the only rest and reward of the souls of men, as they are called and have opportunity.

This, and no other, is the design of the ensuing treatise; wherein, as all things fall unspeakably short of the glory, excellency, and sublimity of the subject treated of, (for no mind can conceive, no tongue can express, the real substantial glory of them,) so there is no doubt but that in all the parts of it there is a reflection of failings and imperfections, from the weakness of its author. But yet I must say with confidence, that in the whole, that eternal truth of God concerning the mystery of his wisdom, love, grace, and power, in the person and mediation of Christ, with our duties towards himself therein, even the Father, Son, and eternal Spirit, is pleaded and vindicated, which shall never be shaken by the utmost endeavours and oppositions of the gates of hell.

And in the acknowledgment of the truth concerning these things consists, in an especial manner, that faith which was the life and glory of the primitive church, which they earnestly contended for, wherein and whereby they were victorious against all the troops of stumbling adversaries by whom it was assaulted. In giving testimony hereunto, they loved not their lives unto the death, but poured out their blood like water, under all the pagan persecutions, which had no other design but to cast them down and separate them from

this impregnable rock, this precious foundation. In the defence of these truths did they conflict, in prayers, studies, travels, and writings, against the swarms of seducers by whom they were opposed. And, for this cause, I thought to have confirmed the principal passages of the ensuing discourse with some testimonies from the most ancient writers of the first ages of the church; but I omitted that course, as fearing that the interposition of such passages might obstruct instead of promoting the edification of the common sort of readers, which I principally intended. Yet, withal, I thought not good utterly to neglect that design, but to give at least a specimen of their sentiments about the principal truths pleaded for, in this preface to the whole. But herein, also, I met with a disappointment; for the bookseller having, unexpectedly unto me, finished the printing of the discourse itself, I must be contented to make use of what lieth already collected under my hand, not having leisure or time to make any farther inquiry.

I shall do something of this nature, the rather because I shall have occasion thereby to give a summary account of some of the principal parts of the discourse itself, and to clear some passages in it, which by some may be apprehended obscure.

Chap. I. The foundation of the whole is laid in the vindication of those words of our blessed Saviour, wherein he declares himself to be the rock whereon the church is built: (Matt. xvi. 18:) "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The pretended ambiguity of these words hath been wrested by the secular interests of men, to give occasion unto that prodigious controversy among Christians, viz., whether Jesus Christ or the Pope of Rome be the rock whereon the church is built. Those holy men of old unto whom Christ was precious, being untainted with the desires of secular grandeur and power, knew nothing hereof. Testimonies may be—they have been—multiplied by others unto this purpose. I shall mention some few of them.

Οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ἄγουσα ὁδός, ἡ πέτρα, ἡ κλεὶς, ὁ ποιμὴν, &c., saith Ignatius: Epist. ad Philadelph.—"He" (that is, Christ) "is the way leading unto the Father, the rock, the key, the shepherd"—wherein he hath respect unto this testimony. And Origen expressly denies the words to be spoken of Peter, in Matt. xvi.: (Tract. i.:) "Quod si super unum illum Petrum tantum existimes totam ecclesiam ædificari, quid dicturus es de Johanne, et apostolorum unoquoque? Num audebimus dicere quod adversus Petrum unum non prevalituræ sunt portæ inferorum?"—"If you shall think that the whole church was built on Peter alone, what shall we say of John, and each of the apostles? What! shall we dare to say that the gates of hell

shall not prevail against Peter only?" So he [held,] according unto the common opinion of the ancients, that there was nothing peculiar in the confession of Peter, and the answer made thereunto, as unto himself, but that he spake and was spoken unto in the name of all the rest of the apostles. Euseb. Præparat. Evang., lib. i. cap. 3: Ἥτε ὀνομαστὶ προθεσπισθεῖσα ἐκκλησία αὐτοῦ ἔστηκε κατὰ βάθους ἐρριζωμένη, καὶ μέχρις οὐρανίων ἀψίδων εὐχαῖς ὁσίων καὶ θεοφιλῶν ἀνδρῶν μετεωριζομένη—— διὰ μίαν ἐκείνην, ἣν αὐτὸς ἀπεφήνατο λέξιν, εἶπων, Ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾅδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. He proves the verity of divine predictions from the glorious accomplishment of that word, and the promise of our Saviour, that he would build his church on the rock, (that is, himself,) so as that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. For "Unum hoc est immobile fundamentum, una hæc est felix fidei Petra, Petri ore confessa, Tu es filius Dei vivi," saith Hilary de Trin., lib. ii.—"This is the only immovable foundation, this is the blessed rock of faith, confessed by Peter, Thou art the Son of the living God." And Epiphanius, Hær. xxxix.: Ἐπὶ τῇ πέτρᾳ ταύτῃ τῆς ἀσφαλοῦς πίστεως οἰκοδομήσω μοῦ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.—"Upon this rock" of assured faith "I will build my church." For many thought that faith itself was metonymically called the Rock, because of its object, or the person of Christ, which is so.

One or two more out of Augustine shall close these testimonies: "Super hanc Petram, quam confessus es, super meipsum filium Dei vivi, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Super me ædificabo te, non me super te:" De Verbis Dom., Serm. xiii.—"Upon this rock which thou hast confessed—upon myself, the Son of the living God—I will build my church. I will build thee upon myself, and not myself on thee." And he more fully declareth his mind: (Tract. cxxiv., in Johan.:) "Universam significabat ecclesiam, quæ in hoc seculo diversis tentationibus, velut imbribus, fluminibus, tempestatibusque quatitur, et non cadit; quoniam fundata est supra Petram; unde et Petrus nomen accepit. Non enim a Petro Petra, sed Petrus a Petra; sicut non Christus a Christiano, sed Christianus a Christo vocatur. Ideo quippe ait Dominus, 'Super hanc Petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam,' quia dixerat Petrus, 'Tu es Christus filius Dei vivi.' 'Super hanc ergo' (inquit) 'Petram quam confessus es, ædificabo ecclesiam meam.' Petra enim erat Christus, super quod fundamentum etiam ipse ædificatus est Petrus. Fundamentum quippe aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum est, quod est Jesus Christus."—"He (Christ) meant the universal church, which in this world is shaken with divers temptations, as with showers, floods, and tempests, yet falleth not, because it is built on the rock *(Petra)* from whence Peter took his name. For the rock is not called *Petra* from Peter, but Peter is so called from *Petra* the rock; as Christ is not so called from Christian, but

Christian from Christ. Therefore, said the Lord, 'Upon this rock will I build my church;' because Peter had said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Upon this rock, which thou hast confessed, will I build my church. For Christ himself was the rock on which foundation Peter himself was built. For other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Chap. II. Against this rock, this foundation of the church—the person of Christ, and the faith of the church concerning it—great opposition hath been made by the gates of hell. Not to mention the rage of the pagan world, endeavouring by all effects of violence and cruelty to cast the church from this foundation; all the heresies wherewith from the beginning, and for some centuries of years ensuing, it was pestered, consisted in direct and immediate oppositions unto the eternal truth concerning the person of Christ. Some that are so esteemed, indeed, never pretended unto any sobriety, but were mere effects of delirant [raving] imaginations; yet did even they also, one way or other, derive from an hatred unto the person of Christ, and centred therein. Their beginning was early in the church, even before the writing of the Gospel by John, or of his Revelation, and indeed before some of Paul's epistles. And although their beginning was but small, and seemingly contemptible, yet, being full of the poison of the old serpent, they diffused themselves in various shapes and forms, until there was nothing left of Christ—nothing that related unto him, not his natures, divine or human, not their properties nor actings, not his person, nor the union of his natures therein—that was not opposed and assaulted by them. Especially so soon as the gospel had subdued the Roman empire unto Christ, and was owned by the rulers of it, the whole world was for some ages filled with uproars, confusion, and scandalous disorders about the person of Christ, through the cursed oppositions made thereunto by the gates of hell. Neither had the church any rest from these conflicts for about five hundred years. But near that period of time, the power of truth and religion beginning universally to decay among the outward professors of them, Satan took advantage to make that havoc and destruction of the church—by superstition, false worship, and profaneness of life—which he failed of in his attempt against the person of Christ, or the doctrine of truth concerning it.

It would be a tedious work, and, it may be, not of much profit unto them who are utterly unacquainted with things so long past and gone, wherein they seem to have no concernment, to give a specimen of the several heresies whereby attempts were made against this rock and foundation of the church. Unto those who have inquired into the records of antiquity, it would be altogether useless.

For almost every page of them, at first view, presents the reader with an account of some one or more of them. Yet do I esteem it useful, that the very ordinary sort of Christians should, at least in general, be acquainted with what hath passed in this great contest about the person of Christ, from the beginning. For there are two things relating thereunto wherein their faith is greatly concerned. *First*, There is evidence given therein unto the truth of those predictions of the Scripture, wherein this fatal apostasy from the truth, and opposition unto the Lord Christ, are foretold: and, *secondly*, An eminent instance of his power and faithfulness, in the disappointment and conquest of the gates of hell in the management of this opposition. But they have been all reckoned up, and digested into methods of time and matter, by many learned men, (of old and of late,) so that I shall not in this occasional discourse represent them unto the reader again. Only I shall give a brief account of the ways and means whereby they who retained the profession of the truth contended for it, unto a conquest over the pernicious heresies wherewith it was opposed.

The defence of the truth, from the beginning, was left in charge unto, and managed by, the guides and rulers of the church in their several capacities. And by the Scripture it was that they discharged their duty, confirmed with apostolical tradition consonant thereunto. This was left in charge unto them by the great apostle, (Acts xx. 28–31; 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14; 2 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 15, 23, 24, iv. 1–5,) and wherein any of them failed in this duty, they were reproved by Christ himself: Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. Nor were private believers (in their places and capacities) either unable for this duty or exempt from it, but discharged themselves faithfully therein, according unto commandment given unto them: 1 John ii. 20, 27, iv. 1–3; 2 John 8, 9. All true believers, in their several stations—by mutual watchfulness, preaching, or writing, according unto their calls and abilities—effectually used the outward means for the preservation and propagation of the faith of the church. And the same means are still sufficient unto the same ends, were they attended unto with conscience and diligence. The pretended defence of truth with arts and arms of another kind hath been the bane of religion, and lost the peace of Christians beyond recovery. And it may be observed, that whilst this way alone for the preservation of the truth was insisted on and pursued, although innumerable heresies arose one after another, and sometimes many together, yet they never made any great progress, nor arrived unto any such consistency as to make a stated opposition unto the truth; but the errors themselves, and their authors, were as vagrant meteors, which appeared for a little while, and vanished away. Afterwards it was not so, when other

ways and means for the suppression of heresies were judged convenient and needful.

For in process of time, when the power of the Roman empire gave countenance and protection unto the Christian religion, another way was fixed on for this end, viz., the use of such assemblies of bishops and others as they called General Councils, armed with a mixed power, partly civil and partly ecclesiastical—with respect unto the authority of the emperors and that jurisdiction in the church which began then to be first talked of. This way was begun in the Council of Nice, wherein, although there was a determination of the doctrine concerning the person of Christ—then in agitation, and opposed, as unto his divine nature therein—according unto the truth, yet sundry evils and inconveniences ensued thereon. For thenceforth the faith of Christians began greatly to be resolved into the authority of men, and as much, if not more weight to be laid on what was decreed by the fathers there assembled, than on what was clearly taught in the Scriptures. Besides, being necessitated, as they thought, to explain their conceptions of the divine nature of Christ in words either not used in the Scripture, or whose signification unto that purpose was not determined therein, occasion was given unto endless contentions about them. The Grecians themselves could not for a long season agree among themselves whether οὐσία and ὑπόστασις were of the same signification or no, (both of them denoting essence and substance,) or whether they differed in their signification, or if they did, wherein that difference lay. Athanasius at first affirmed them to be the same: Orat. v. con. Arian., and Epist. ad African. Basil denied them so to be, or that they were used unto the same purpose in the Council of Nice: Epist. lxxviii. The like difference immediately fell out between the Grecians and Latins about "hypostasis" and "persona." For the Latins rendered "hypostasis" by "substantia," and πρόσωπον by "persona." Hereof Jerome complains, in his Epistle to Damasus, that they required of him in the East to confess "tres hypostases," and he would only acknowledge "tres personas:" Epist. lxxi. And Augustine gives an account of the same difference: De Trinitate, lib. v. cap. 8, 9. Athanasius endeavoured the composing of this difference, and in a good measure effected it, as Gregory Nazianzen affirms in his oration concerning his praise. It was done by him in a synod at Alexandria, in the first year of Julian's reign. On this occasion many contests arose even among them who all pleaded their adherence unto the doctrine of the Council of Nice. And as the subtle Arians made incredible advantage hereof at first, pretending that they opposed not the deity of Christ, but only the expression of it by ὁμοούσιος, so afterwards they countenanced themselves in coining

words and terms, to express their minds with, which utterly rejected it. Hence were their ὁμοιούσιος, ἑτερούσιος, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, and the like names of blasphemy, about which the contests were fierce and endless. And there were yet farther evils that ensued hereon. For the curious and serpentine wits of men, finding themselves by this means set at liberty to think and discourse of those mysteries of the blessed Trinity, and the person of Christ, without much regard unto plain divine testimonies, (in such ways wherein cunning and sophistry did much bear sway,) began to multiply such new, curious, and false notions about them, especially about the latter, as caused new disturbances, and those of large extent and long continuance. For their suppression, councils were called on the neck of one another, whereon commonly new occasions of differences did arise, and most of them managed with great scandal unto the Christian religion. For men began much to forego the primitive ways of opposing errors and extinguishing heresies; betaking themselves unto their interest, the number of their party, and their prevalency with the present emperors. And although it so fell out—as in that at Constantinople, the first at Ephesus, and that at Chalcedon—that the truth (for the substance of it) did prevail, (for in many others it happened quite otherwise,) yet did they always give occasions unto new divisions, animosities, and even mutual hatreds, among the principal leaders of the Christian people. And great contests there were among some of those who pretended to believe the same truth, whether such or such a council should be received—that is, plainly, whether the church should resolve its faith into their authority. The strifes of this nature about the first Ephesian Council, and that at Chalcedon, not to mention those wherein the Arians prevailed, take up a good part of the ecclesiastical story of those days. And it cannot be denied, but that some of the principal persons and assemblies who adhered unto the truth did, in the heat of opposition unto the heresies of other men, fall into unjustifiable excess themselves.

We may take an instance hereof with respect unto the Nestorian heresy, condemned in the first Ephesian Council, and afterward in that at Chalcedon. Cyril of Alexandria, a man learned and vehement, designed by all means to be unto it what his predecessor Athanasius had been to the Arian; but he fell into such excesses in his undertakings, as gave great occasion unto farther tumults. For it is evident that he distinguisheth not between ὑπόστασις and φύσις, and therefore affirms, that the divine Word and humanity had μίαν φύσιν, one nature only. So he doth plainly in Epist. ad Successum: "They are ignorant," saith he, ὅτι κατ' ἀλήθειαν ἐστὶ μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη. Hence Eutyches the Archimandrite took occasion to run into a contrary extreme, being a no less fierce enemy to Nestorius

than Cyril was. For to oppose him who divided the person of Christ into two, he confounded his natures into one—his delirant folly being confirmed by that goodly assembly, the second at Ephesus. Besides, it is confessed that Cyril—through the vehemency of his spirit, hatred unto Nestorius, and following the conduct of his own mind in nice and subtle expressions of the great mystery of the person of Christ—did utter many things exceeding the bounds of sobriety prescribed unto us by the apostle, (Rom. xii. 3,) if not those of truth itself. Hence it is come to pass, that many learned men begin to think and write that Cyril was in the wrong, and Nestorius by his means condemned undeservedly. However, it is certain to me, that the doctrine condemned at Ephesus and Chalcedon as the doctrine of Nestorius, was destructive of the true person of Christ; and that Cyril, though he missed it in sundry expressions, yet aimed at the declaration and confirmation of the truth; as he was long since vindicated by Theorianus: Dialog. con. Armenios.

However, such was the watchful care of Christ over the church, as unto the preservation of this sacred, fundamental truth, concerning his divine person, and the union of his natures therein, retaining their distinct properties and operations, that—notwithstanding all the faction and disorder that were in those primitive councils, and the scandalous contests of many of the members of them; notwithstanding the determination contrary unto it in great and numerous councils—the faith of it was preserved entire in the hearts of all that truly believed, and triumphed over the gates of hell.

I have mentioned these few things, which belong unto the promise and prediction of our blessed Saviour in Matt. xvi. 18, (the place insisted on,) to show that the church, without any disadvantage to the truth, may be preserved without such general assemblies, which, in the following ages, proved the most pernicious engines for the corruption of the faith, worship, and manners of it. Yea, from the beginning, they were so far from being the only way of preserving truth, that it was almost constantly prejudiced by the addition of their authority unto the confirmation of it. Nor was there any one of them wherein "the mystery of iniquity" did not work, unto the laying of some rubbish in the foundation of that fatal apostasy which afterwards openly ensued. The Lord Christ himself hath taken it upon him to build his church on this rock of his person, by true faith *of* it and *in* it. He sends his Holy Spirit to bear testimony unto him, in all the blessed effects of his power and grace. He continueth his Word, with the faithful ministry of it, to reveal, declare, make known, and vindicate his sacred truth, unto the conviction of gainsayers. He keeps up that faith in him, that love unto him, in the hearts of all his elect, as shall not be prevailed against. Wherefore,

although the oppositions unto this sacred truth, this fundamental article of the church and the Christian religion—concerning his divine person, its constitution, and use, as the human nature conjoined substantially unto it, and subsisting in it—are in this last age increased; although they are managed under so great a variety of forms, as that they are not reducible unto any heads of order; although they are promoted with more subtlety and specious pretences than in former ages; yet, if we are not wanting unto our duty, with the aids of grace proposed unto us, we shall finally triumph in this cause, and transmit this sacred truth inviolate unto them that succeed us in the profession of it.

Chap. III. This person of Christ, which is the foundation whereon the church is built, whereunto all sorts of oppositions are endeavoured and designed, is the most ineffable effect of divine goodness and wisdom—whereof we treat in the next place. But herein, when I speak of the constitution of the person of Christ, I intend not his person absolutely, as he is the eternal Son of God. He was truly, really, completely, a divine person from eternity, which is included in the notion of his being the Son, and so distinct from the Father, which is his complete personality. His being so was not a voluntary contrivance or effect of divine wisdom and goodness, his eternal generation being a necessary internal act of the divine nature in the person of the Father.

Of the eternal generation of the divine person of the Son, the sober writers of the ancient church did constantly affirm that it was firmly to be believed, but as unto the manner of it not to be inquired into. "Scrutator majestatis absorbetur a gloria," was their rule; and the curious disputes of Alexander and Arius about it, gave occasion unto that many-headed monster of the Arian heresy which afterwards ensued. For when once men of subtile heads and unsanctified hearts gave themselves up to inquire into things infinitely above their understanding and capacity—being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds—they fell into endless divisions among themselves, agreeing only in an opposition unto the truth. But those who contented themselves to be wise unto sobriety, repressed this impious boldness. To this purpose speaks Lactantius: (lib. iv., De Verâ Sapient.:) "Quomodo igitur procreavit? Nec sciri a quoquam possunt, nec narrari, opera divina; sed tamen sacræ literæ docent illum Dei filium, Dei esse sermonem."—"How, therefore, did the Father beget the Son? These divine works can be known of none, declared by none; but the holy writings" (wherein it is determined) "teach that he is the Son of God, that he is the Word of God." And Ambrose: (De Fide, ad Gratianum:) "Quæro abs te, quando aut quomodo putes filium

esse generatum? mihi enim impossibile est scire generationis secretum. Mens deficit, vox silet, non mea tantum, sed et angelorum. Supra potestates, supra angelos, supra cherubim, supra seraphim, supra omnem sensum est. Tu quoque manum ori admove; scrutari non licet superna mysteria. Licet scire quod natus sit, non licet discutere quomodo natus sit; illud negare mihi non licet, hoc quærere metus est. Nam si Paulus ea quæ audivit, raptus in tertium cœlum, ineffabilia dicit, quomodo nos exprimere possumus paternæ generationis arcanum, quod nec sentire potuimus nec audire? Quid te ista questionum tormenta delectant?"—"I inquire of you when and how the Son was begotten? Impossible it is to me to know the mystery of this generation. My mind faileth, my voice is silent—and not only mine, but of the angels; it is above principalities, above angels, above the cherubim, above the seraphim, above all understanding. Lay thy hand on thy mouth; it is not lawful to search into these heavenly mysteries. It is lawful to know that he was born—it is not lawful to discuss *how* he was born; *that* it is not lawful for me to deny—*this* I am afraid to inquire into. For if Paul, when he was taken into the third heaven, affirms that the things which he heard could not be uttered; how can we express the mystery of the divine generation, which we can neither apprehend nor hear? Why do such tormenting questions delight thee?"

Ephraim Syrus wrote a book to this purpose, against those who would search out the nature of the Son of God. Among many other things to the same purpose are his words: (cap. ii.:) "Infelix profecto, miser, atque impudentissimus est, qui scrutari cupit Opificem suum. Millia millium, et centies millies millena millia angelorum et archangelorum, cum horrore glorificant, et trementes adorant; et homines lutei, pleni peccatis, de divinitate intrepide disserunt? Non illorum exhorrescit corpus, non contremescit animus; sed securi et garruli, de Christo Dei filio, qui pro me indigno peccatore passus est, deque ipsius utraque generatione loquuntur; nec saltem quod in luce cæcutiunt, sentiunt."—"He is unhappy, miserable, and most impudent, who desires to examine or search out his Maker. Thousands of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of millions of angels and archangels, do glorify him with dread, and adore him with trembling; and shall men of clay, full of sins, dispute of the Deity without fear? Horror doth not shake their bodies, their minds do not tremble, but being secure and prating, they speak of the Son of God, who suffered for me, unworthy sinner, and of both his nativities or generations; at least they are not sensible how blind they are in the light." To the same purpose speaks Eusebius at large: Demonstratio Evang., lib. v. cap. 2.

Leo well adds hereunto the consideration of his incarnation, in these excellent words: (Serm. ix., De Nativit.:) "Quia in Christo

Jesu Filio Dei, non solum ad divinam essentiam, sed etiam ad humanam spectat naturam, quod dictum est per prophetam—'generationem ejus quis enarrabit?'—(utramque enim substantiam in unam convenisse personam, nisi fides credat, sermo non explicat; et ideo materia nunquam deficit laudis; quia nunquam sufficit copia laudatoris)—gaudeamus igitur quod ad eloquendum tantum misericordiæ sacramentum impares sumus; et cum salutis nostræ altitudinem promere non valeamus, sentiamus nobis bonum esse quod vincimur. Nemo enim ad cognitionem veritatis magis propinquat, quam qui intelligit, in rebus divinis, etiamsi multum proficiat, semper sibi superesse quod quærat." See also Fulg., lib. ii. ad Thrasimund.

But I speak of the person of Christ as unto the assumption of the substantial adjunct of the human nature, not to be a part whereof his person is composed, but as unto its subsistence therein by virtue of a substantial union. Some of the ancients, I confess, speak freely of the composition of the person of Christ in and by the two natures, the divine and human. That the Son of God after his incarnation had one *nature*, composed of the Deity and humanity, was the heresy of Apollinarius, Eutyches, the Monothelites, or Monophysites, condemned by all. But that his most simple divine nature, and the human, composed properly of soul and body, did compose his one *person*, or that it was composed of them, they constantly affirmed. Τὸν Θεοῦ μεσίτην καὶ ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς συγκεῖσθαι φάμεν ἐκ τε τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀνθρωπότητος τελείως ἐχούσας κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον λόγον, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πεφηνότος ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν υἱοῦ, saith Cyril of Alexandria.—"A sanctis patribus adunatione ex divinitate et humanitate Christus Dominus noster compositus prædicatur:" Pet. Diacon., lib. de Incarnat. et Grat. Christi, ad Fulgentium. And the union which they intended by this composition they called ἕνωσιν φυσικὴν, because it was of diverse natures, and ἕνωσιν κατὰ σύνθεσιν, a union by composition.

But because there neither was nor can be any composition, properly so called, of the divine and human natures, and because the Son of God was a perfect person before his incarnation—wherein he remained what he was, and was made what he was not—the expression hath been forsaken and avoided; the union being better expressed by the assumption of a substantial adjunct, or the human nature, into personal subsistence with the Son of God, as shall be afterwards explained. This they constantly admire as the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. Ὁ ἄσαρκος σαρκοῦται, ὁ λόγος παχύνεται, ὁ ἀόρατος ὁρᾶται, ὁ ἀναφὴς ψηλαφᾶται, ὁ ἄχρονος ἄρχεται, ὁ υἱὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου γίνεται, saith Gregory Nazianzen, (Orat. xii.,) in admiration of this mystery. Hereby God communicates all things unto us from his own glorious fulness, the near approaches whereof we are not able to bear. So is it illustrated by Eusebius: (Demonst.

Evang., lib. iv. cap. 5, &c. :) Οὕτω δὲ φωτὸς ἡλίου μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ προσζολὴ ὁμοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ καταυγάζει μὲν ἄερα, φωτίζει δὲ ὀφθαλμοὺς, ἀφὴν δὲ θερμαίνει, πιαίνει δὲ γῆν, αὔξει δε φυτὰ, κ. τ. λ.. (cap. vi.) Εἰ γοῦν ὡς ἐν ὑποθέσει λόγου, καθεὶς οὐρανόθεν αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν παμφαὴς ἥλιος σὺν ἀνθρώποις ἐπὶ γῆς πολιτευοίτο, οὐδένα τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μείναι ἂν ἀδιάφορον, πάντων συλλήδδην ἐμψύχων ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀψύχων ἀθροᾳ τῃ τοῦ φωτὸς προσζολῃ διαφθαρησομένων. The sense of which words, with some that follow in the same place, is unto this purpose: By the beams of the sun, light, and life, and heat, unto the procreation, sustentation, refreshment, and cherishing of all things, are communicated. But if the sun itself should come down unto the earth, nothing could bear its heat and lustre; our eyes would not be enlightened but darkened by its glory, and all things be swallowed up and consumed by its greatness; whereas, through the beams of it, every thing is enlightened and kindly refreshed. So is it with this eternal beam or brightness of the Father's glory. We cannot bear the immediate approach of the Divine Being; but through him, as incarnate, are all things communicated unto us, in a way suited unto our reception and comprehension.

So is it admired by Leo: (Serm. iii., De Nativit.:) "Natura humana in Creatoris societatem assumpta est, non ut ille habitator, et illa esset habitaculum; sed ut naturæ alteri sic misceretur altera, ut quamvis alia sit quæ suscipitur, alia vero quæ suscepit, in tantam tamen unitatem conveniret utriusque diversitas, ut unus idemque sit filius, qui se, et secundum quod verus est homo, Patre dicit minorem, et secundum quod verus est Deus Patri se profitetur æqualem."—"Human nature is assumed into the society of the Creator, not that he should be the inhabitant, and that the habitation," (that is, by an inhabitation in the effects of his power and grace, for otherwise the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,) "but that one nature should be so mingled" (that is, conjoined) "with the other, that although that be of one kind which assumeth, and that of another which is assumed; yet the diversity of them both should concur in such a unity or union, as that it is one and the same Son —who, as he was a true man, said that he was less than the Father, or the Father was greater than he—so as he was true God, professeth himself equal unto the Father." See also Augustinus De Fide, ad Pet. Diacon., cap. xvii.; Justitianus Imperator Epist. ad. Hormisdam, Romæ Episcop.

And the mystery is well expressed by Maxentius: (Biblioth. Patr. pars prima:) "Non confundimus naturarum diversitatem; veruntamen Christum non ut tu asseris Deum factum, sed Deum factum Christum confitemur. Quia non cum pauper esset, dives factus est, sed cum dives esset, pauper factus est, ut nos divites faceret; neque enim cum esset in formâ servi, formam Dei accepit; sed cum esset in

formâ Dei, formam servi accepit; similiter etiam nec, cum esset caro, verbum est factum; sed cum esset verbum, caro factum est."—"We do not confound the diversity of the natures, howbeit we believe not what you affirm, that Christ was made God; but we believe that God was made Christ. For he was not made rich when he was poor; but being rich, he was made poor, that he might make us rich. He did not take the form of God when he was in the form of a servant; but being in the form of God, he took on him the form of a servant. In like manner, he was not made the Word when he was flesh; but being the Word, he was made flesh."

And Jerome, speaking of the effects of this mystery: (Comment. in Ezekiel, cap. xlvi.:) "Ne miretur lector si idem et Princeps est et Sacerdos, et Vitulus, et Aries, et Agnus; cum in Scripturis sanctis pro varietate causarum legamus eum Dominum, et Deum, et Hominem, et Prophetam, et Virgam, et Radicem, et Florem, et Principem, et Regem justum, et Justitiam, Apostolum, et Episcopum, Brachium, Servum, Angelum, Pastorem, Filium, et Unigenitum, et Primogenitum, Ostium, Viam, Sagittam, Sapientiam, et multa alia."—"Let not the reader wonder if he find one and the same to be the Prince and Priest, the Bullock, Ram, and Lamb; for in the Scripture, on variety of causes, we find him called Lord, God, and Man, the Prophet, a Rod, and the Root, the Flower, Prince, Judge, and Righteous King; Righteousness, the Apostle and Bishop, the Arm and Servant of God, the Angel, the Shepherd, the Son, the Only-begotten, the First-begotten, the Door, the Way, the Arrow, Wisdom, and sundry other things." And Ennodius hath, as it were, turned this passage of Jerome into verse:—

> "Corda domat, qui cuncta videt, quem cuncta tremiscunt;
> Fons, via, dextra, lapis, vitulus, leo, lucifer, agnus;
> Janua, spes, virtus, verbum, sapientia, vates.
> Ostia, virgultum, pastor, mons, rete, columba,
> Flamma, gigas, aquila, sponsus, patientia, nervus,
> Filius, excelsus, Dominus, Deus; omnia Christus."
>
> (*In natalem Papæ Epiphanii.*)

"Quod homo est esse Christus voluit; ut et homo possit esse quod Christus est," saith Cyprian: De Idolorum Vanitate, cap. iii. And, "Quod est Christus erimus Christiani, si Christum fuerimus imitati:" Ibid. And he explains his mind in this expression by way of admiration: (Lib. de Eleemosyn.:) "Christus hominis filius fieri voluit, ut nos Dei filios faceret; humiliavit se, ut populum qui prius jacebat, erigeret; vulneratus est, ut vulnera nostra curaret."

CHAP. IV. That he was the foundation of all the holy counsels of God, with respect unto the vocation, sanctification, justification,

and eternal salvation of the church, is, in the next place, at large declared. And he was so on a threefold account. 1. Of the ineffable mutual delight of the Father and the Son in those counsels from all eternity. 2. As the only way and means of the accomplishment of all those counsels, and the communication of their effects, unto the eternal glory of God. 3. As he was in his own person, as incarnate, the idea and exemplar in the mind of God of all that grace and glory in the church which was designed unto it in those eternal counsels. As the cause of all good unto us, he is on this account acknowledged by the ancients. Οὗτος γοῦν ὁ λόγος, ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ τοῦ εἶναι πάλαι ἡμᾶς, ἦν γὰρ ἐν Θεῷ, καὶ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι αἴτιος. Νῦν δὲ ἐπεφάνη ἀνθρώποις, αὐτὸς οὗτος ὁ λόγος, ὁ μόνος ἄμφω Θεός τε καὶ ἄνθρωπος, ἀπάντων ἡμῖν αἴτιος ἀγαθων, saith Clemens, Adhort. ad Gentes.—"He, therefore, is the Word, the Christ, and the cause of old of our being; for he was in God, and the cause of our wellbeing. But now he hath appeared unto men, the same eternal Word, who alone is both God and man, and unto us the cause of all that is good." As he was in God the cause of our being and wellbeing from eternity, he was the foundation of the divine counsels in the way explained; and in his incarnation, the execution of them all was committed unto him, that through him all actual good, all the fruits of those counsels, might be communicated unto us.

Chap. V. He is also declared in the next place, as he is the image and great representative of God, even the Father, unto the church. On what various accounts he is so called, is fully declared in the discourse itself. In his divine person, as he was the only-begotten of the Father from eternity, he is the essential image of the Father, by the generation of his person, and the communication of the divine nature unto him therein. As he is incarnate, he is both in his own entire person God and man, and in the administration of his office, the image or representative of the nature and will of God unto us, as is fully proved. So speaks Clem. Alexandrin., Adhort. ad Gentes: Ἡ μεν γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰκὼν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ, καὶ υἱὸς τοῦ νοῦ γνήσιος, ὁ θεῖος λόγος, φωτὸς ἀρχέτυπον φῶς, εἰκὼν δὲ τοῦ λόγου ὁ ἄνθρώπος.—"The image of God is his own Word, the natural Son of the" (eternal) "Mind, the divine Word, the original Light of Light; and the image of the Word is man." And the same author again, in his Pædagogus: Πρόσωπον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ λόγος, ᾧ φωτίζεται ὁ Θεὸς καὶ γνωρίζεται.—"The Word is the face, the countenance, the representation of God, in whom he is brought to light and made known." As he is in his divine person his eternal, essential image; so, in his incarnation, as the teacher of men, he is the representative image of God unto the church, as is afterward declared.

So also Jerome expresseth his mind herein: (Comment. in Psal. lxvi.:) "Illuminet vultum suum super nos; Dei facies quæ est? utique imago ejus. Dicit enim apostolus imaginem Patris esse filium; ergo imagine sua nos illuminet; hoc est, imaginem suam filium illuminet super nos; ut ipse nos illuminet; lux enim Patris lux filii est." —"Let him cause his face to shine upon us; or lift up the light of his countenance upon us. What is the face of God? even his image. For the apostle says, that the Son is the image of the Father. Wherefore, let him shine on us with his image; that is, cause his Son, which is his image, to shine upon us, that he may illuminate us; for the light of the Father and of the Son are the same." Christ being the image of God, the face of God, in him is God represented unto us, and through him are all saving benefits communicated unto them that believe.

Eusebius also speaks often unto this purpose, as: (Demonstratio Evangelica, lib. iv. cap. 2:) Ὅθεν εἰκότως οἱ χρησμοὶ θεολογοῦντες, θεὸν γεννητὸν αὐτὸν ἀποφαίνουσιν, ὡς ἂν τῆς ἀνεκφράστου καὶ ἀπερινοήτου θεότητος μόνον ἐν αὐτῷ φέροντα τὴν εἰκόνα, δι' ἣν καὶ θεὸν εἶναι τε αὐτὸν καὶ λέγεσθαι τῆς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἐξομοιώσεως χάριν.—"Wherefore, the holy oracles, speaking theologically, or teaching divine things, do rightly call him God begotten," (of the Father,) "as he who alone bears in himself the image of the ineffable and inconceivable Deity. Wherefore, he both is, and is called God, because of his being the character, similitude, or image of him who is the first." The divine personality of Christ consists in this, that the whole divine nature being communicated unto him by eternal generation, he is the image of God, even the Father, who by him is represented unto us. See the same book, chap. vii., to the same purpose; also, De Ecclesiast. Theol. contra Marcell., lib. ii. cap. 17.

Clemens abounds much in the affirmation of this truth concerning the person of Christ, and we may yet add, from a multitude to the same purpose, one or more testimonies from him. Treating of Christ as the teacher of all men, his παιδαγωγὸς, he affirms that he is Θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώπου σχήματι, "God in the figure or form of man;" ἄχραντος, πατρικῷ θελήματι διάκονος, λόγος, Θεὸς, ὁ ἐν πατρὶ, ὁ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρὸς, σὺν καὶ τῷ σχήματι Θεοῦ, "impolluted, serving the will of the Father, the Word, God, who is in the Father, on the right hand of the Father, and in or with the form of God." Οὗτος ἡμῖν εἰκὼν ἡ ἀκηλίδωτος, τούτῳ πάντι σθένει πειρατέον ἐξομοιοῦν τὴν ψυχήν.—"He is the image (of God) unto us, wherein there is no blemish; and with all our strength are we to endeavour to render ourselves like unto him." This is the great end of his being the representative image of God unto us. And: (Stromat., lib. iv.:) Ὁ μὲν οὖν Θεὸς ἀναπόδεικτος ὤν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός. Ὁ δὲ υἱὸς σοφία τε ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἀλήθεια, καὶ,

ὅσῳ ἄλλα τούτῳ συγγενῆ.—"As God" (absolutely) "falls not under demonstration," (that is, cannot perfectly be declared,) "so he doth not" (immediately) "effect or teach us knowledge. But the Son is wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, unto us, and every thing which is cognate hereunto." For in and by him doth God teach us, and represent himself unto us.

Chap. VII. Upon the glory of this divine person of Christ depends the efficacy of all his offices; an especial demonstration whereof is given in his prophetical office. So it is well expressed by Irenæus, "qui nil molitur ineptè:" Lib. i. cap. 1. "Non enim aliter nos discere poteramus quæ sunt Dei, nisi magister noster verbum existens, homo factus fuisset. Neque enim alius poterat enarrare nobis quæ sunt Patris, nisi proprium ipsius verbum. Quis enim alius cognovit sensum Domini? aut quis alius ejus consiliarius factus est? Neque rursus nos aliter discere poteramus, nisi Magistrum nostrum videntes, et per auditum nostrum vocem ejus percipientes, uti imitatores quidem operum, factores autem sermonum ejus facti, communionem habeamus cum ipso."—"We could not otherwise have learned the things of God, unless our Master, being and continuing the" (eternal) "Word, had been made man. For no other could declare unto us the things of God, but his own proper Word. For who else hath known the mind of the Lord? or who else hath been his counsellor? Neither, on the other side, could we otherwise have learned, unless we had seen our Master, and heard his voice," (in his incarnation and ministry,) "whereby, following his works, and yielding obedience unto his doctrine, we may have communion with himself."

I do perceive that if I should proceed with the same kind of attestations unto the doctrine of all the chapters in the ensuing discourse, this preface would be drawn forth unto a greater length than was ever designed unto it, or is convenient for it. I shall therefore choose out one or two instances more, to give a specimen of the concurrence of the ancient church in the doctrine declared in them, and so put a close unto it.

Chap. IX. In the ninth chapter and those following, we treat of the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, expressed in adoration, invocation, and obedience, proceeding from faith and love. And the foundation of the whole is laid in the discovery of the true nature and causes of that honour; and three things are designed unto confirmation herein. 1. That the divine nature, which is individually the same in each person of the holy Trinity, is the proper formal object of all divine worship, in adoration and invocation; wherefore, no one person is or can be worshipped, but in the same individual act

of worship each person is equally worshipped and adored. 2. That it is lawful to direct divine honour, worship, and invocation unto any person, in the use of his peculiar name—the Father, Son, or Spirit—or unto them altogether; but to make any request unto one person, and immediately the same unto another, is not exemplified in the Scripture, nor among the ancient writers of the church. 3. That the person of Christ, as God-man, is the proper object of all divine honour and worship, on the account of his divine nature; and all that he did in his human nature are motives thereunto.

The first of these is the constant doctrine of the whole ancient church, viz., that whether, (for instance,) in our solemn prayers and invocations, we call expressly on the name of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit; whether we do it absolutely or relatively, that is, with respect unto the relation of one person to the other—as calling on God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, on Christ as the Son of his love, on the Holy Spirit as proceeding from them both—we do formally invocate and call on the divine nature, and consequently the whole Trinity, and each person therein. This truth they principally confirmed with the form of our initiation into Christ at baptism: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For as there is contained therein the sum of all divine honour, so it is directed unto the same *name*, (not the names,) of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which is the same Deity or divine nature alone.

So speak the Fathers of the second General Council in their letters unto the bishops of the west; as they are expressed in Theodoret, lib. v. cap. 9. This form of baptism teacheth us, say they, Πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, δηλαδὴ, θεότητός τε καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ οὐσίας μιᾶς τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος πιστευομένης, ὁμοτίμου τῆς ἀξίας, καὶ συναϊδίου τῆς βασιλείας, ἐν τρισὶ τελείαις ὑποστάσεσι·—"to believe in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; seeing that the Deity, substance, and power of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is one and the same; their dignity equal; their kingdom co-eternal, in three perfect persons." "In nomine dixit, non nominibus, ergo non aliud nomen Patris est," &c., "quia unus Deus:" Ambrose, De Spirit. Sanct., lib. i. cap. 14. Ὄνομα δὲ κοινὸν τῶν τριῶν ἕν, ἡ θεότης.—"The one name common to the three is the Deity:" Gregor. Nazianzen, Orat. xl. Hence Augustine gives it as a rule, in speaking of the Holy Trinity: "Quando unus trium in aliquo opere nominatur, universa operari trinitas intelligitur:" Enchirid., cap. xxxviii.—"When one person of the three is named in any work, the whole Trinity is to be understood to effect it." "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism," according to the Scriptures. Wherefore, as there is one faith in Christ, and one bap-

tism of truth, although we are baptized and believe in the Father, Son, and Spirit, *κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν, οἶμαι, τρόπον καὶ λόγον, μία προσκύνησις ἡ πατρὸς, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος υἱοῦ, καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος*;—"so plainly, in my judgment, there is one and the same adoration of the Father, the Son incarnate, and the Holy Spirit:" Cyril. Alex. de Recta Fide, cap. xxxii.

And this they professed themselves to hold and believe, in that ancient doxology which was first invented to decry the Arian heresy: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." The same glory, in every individual act of its assignation or ascription, is directed unto each person jointly and distinctly, on the account of the same divine nature in each of them. I need not produce any testimonies in the farther confirmation hereof; for, in all their writings against the Arians, they expressly and constantly contend that the holy Trinity (that is, the divine nature in three persons) is the individual object of all divine adoration, invocation, and all religious worship; and that by whatever personal name—as the Father, Son, or Spirit—we call on God, it is God absolutely who is adored, and each person participant of the same nature. See August. Lib. con. Serm. Arian. cap. xxxv., and Epist. lxvi. ad Maximum.

For the second thing, or the invocation of God by any personal name, or by the conjunction of the distinct names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together, nothing occurs more frequently among them. Yea, it is common to find in their writings, prayers begun unto one person, and ended in the name of another; yea, begun unto Christ, and closed in the name of His only-begotten Son; it being one and the same divine nature that is called on. Yea, the schoolmen do generally deny that the *persons* of the holy Trinity, under the consideration of the formal reason which is constitutive of their personality, are the formal object and term of divine worship; but in the worship of *one*, they are *all* worshipped as *one God* over all, blessed for ever. See Aquin. xxii. q. 81, a. 3, ad prim., and q. 84, a. 1, ad tertium; Alexand. Alens. p. 3, q. 30, m. 1, a. 3.

But yet, although we may call on God in and by the name of any divine person, or enumerate at once each person, (*ὦ τριὰς ἁγία ἀριθμουμένη, τριὰς ἐν ἑνὶ ὀνόματι ἀριθμουμένη*, Epiphan. Ancorat., viii. 22,) it doth not follow that we may make a request in our prayers unto one person, and then immediately repeat it unto another; for it would thence follow, that the person unto whom we make that request in the second place, was not invocated, not called on, not equally adored with him who was so called on in the first place, although the divine nature is the object of all religious invocation, which is the same in each person. Wherefore, in our divine invocation, we may name and fix our thoughts distinctly on any person, according as our souls

are affected with the distinct operations of each person in grace towards us.

For what concerns, in the third place, the ascription of divine honour, in adoration and invocation, unto the person of Christ; it is that which they principally contended for, and argued from, in all their writings against the Arians.

Evidences of infinite wisdom in the constitution of the person of Christ, and rational discoveries of the condecencies therein, unto the exaltation of all the other glorious properties of the divine nature, are also treated of. Herein we consider the incarnation of the Son of God, with respect unto the recovery and salvation of the church alone. Some have contended that he should have been incarnate, had man never fallen or sinned. Of these are Rupertus, lib. iii., De Gloriâ et Honore Filii Hominis; Albertus Magnus, in iii. distinct. 10, a. 4; Petrus Galatinus, lib. iii. cap. 4; as are Scotus, Halensis, and others, whom Osiander followed. The same is affirmed by Socinus concerning the birth of that man, which alone he fancied him to be, as I have elsewhere declared. But I have disproved this figment at large. Many of the ancients have laboured in this argument, of the necessity of the incarnation of the eternal Word, and the condecencies unto divine wisdom therein. See Irenæus, lib. iii. cap. 20, 21; Eusebius, Demonst. Evangel., lib. iv. cap. 1–4, &c.; Cyril. Alexand., lib. v. cap. 7, lib. i. De Fide ad Regin.; Chrysostom, Homil. x. in Johan., et in cap. 8, ad Rom. Serm. 18; Augustine, De Trinit., lib. xiii. cap. 13–20; Leo, Epist. 13, 18, Sermo. de Nativit. 1, 4, 10; Basil, in Psal. xlviii.; Albinus, lib. i. in Johan. cap. 11; Damascen., lib. iii., De Fide, cap. 15, 19; Anselm, quod Deus Homo, lib. duo. Guil. Parisiensis, lib. Cur Deus Homo. Some especial testimonies we may produce in confirmation of what we have discoursed, in the places directed unto. There is one of them, one of the most ancient, the most learned, and most holy of them, who hath so fully delivered his thoughts concerning this mystery, as that I shall principally make use of his testimony herein.

It belonged unto the wisdom and righteousness of God, that Satan should be conquered and subdued in and by the same nature which he had prevailed against, by his suggestion and temptation. To this purpose that holy writer speaks, (lib. iii. cap. 20,) which, because his words are cited by Theodoret, (Dial. ii.,) I shall transcribe them from thence, as free from the injuries of his barbarous translator: "Ηνωσεν οὖν καθὼς προέφαμεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ Θεῷ, εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἄνθρωπος ἐνίκησεν τὸν ἀντίπαλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως ἐνικήθη ὁ ἐχθρὸς, πάλιν τε, εἰ μὴ ὁ Θεὸς ἐδωρήσατο τὴν σωτηρίαν, οὐκ ἂν βεβαίως ἔχοιμεν αὐτὴν, καὶ εἰ μὴ συνηνώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ Θεῷ οὐκ ἂν ἠδυνήθη μετασχεῖν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας. "Εδει γὰρ τὸν μεσίτην τοῦ Θεοῦ τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων, διὰ τῆς ἰδίας πρὸς ἑκατέρους οἰκειότητος

εἰς φιλίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν τοῦς ἀμφοτέρους συναγαγεῖν. Words plainly divine: an illustrious testimony of the faith of the ancient church, and expressive of the principal mystery of the Gospel! "Wherefore, as we said before, he united man unto God. For if man had not overcome the adversary of men, the enemy had not been justly conquered; and, on the other hand, if God had not given and granted salvation, we could never have a firm, indefeasible possession of it; and if man had not been united unto God, he could not have been partaker of immortality. It behoved, therefore, the Mediator between God and man, by his own participation of the nature of each of them, to bring them both into friendship and agreement with each other." And to the same purpose, speaking of the wisdom of God in our redemption by Christ, with respect unto the conquest of the devil: (lib. v. cap. 1:) "Potens in omnibus Dei Verbum, et non deficiens in suâ justitiâ, justè etiam adversus ipsam conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimens, ab eo, non cum vi, quemadmodum ille initio dominabatur nostri, ea quæ non erant sua insatiabiliter rapiens . . . . . Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro anima nostra, et carnem suam pro carnibus nostris," &c. Again divinely: "The all-powerful Word of God, no way defective in righteousness, set himself against the apostasy justly also; redeeming from him (Satan, the head of the apostasy) the things which were his own—not with force, as he bare rule over us, insatiably making rapine of what was not his own—but he, the Lord, redeeming us with his own blood, giving his soul for our soul, and his flesh for ours, wrought out our deliverance." These things are at large insisted on in the ensuing discourse.

It belongs unto this great mystery, and is a fruit of divine wisdom, that our deliverance should be wrought in and by the same nature wherein and whereby we were ruined. The reasons hereof, and the glory of God therein, are at large discoursed in the ensuing treatise. To the same purpose speaks the same holy writer: (lib. v. cap. 14:) "Non in semetipso recapitulasset hæc Dominus, nisi ipse caro et sanguis secundum principalem plasmationem factus fuisset; salvans in semetipso in fine illud quod perierat in principio in Adam. Si autem ob aliam quandam dispositionem Dominus incarnatus est, et ex alterâ substantiâ carnem attulit, non ergo in semetipso recapitulatus est hominem, adhuc etiam nec caro quidem dici potest. . . . Habuit ergo et ipse carnem et sanguinem, non alteram quandam, sed ipsam principalem Patris plasmationem in se recapitulans, exquirens id quod perierat." And to the same purpose: (lib. v. cap. 1:) "Neque enim vere esse sanguinem et carnem habens, per quam nos redemit, nisi antiquam plasmationem Adæ in seipsum recapitulasset." That which these passages give testimony unto, is what we have discoursed concerning

the necessity of our redemption in and by the nature that sinned; and yet withal, that it should be free from all that contagion which invaded our nature by the fall. And these things are divinely expressed. "Our Lord," saith he, "had not gathered up these things in himself, had not he been made flesh and blood, according unto its original creation." (The reader may observe, that none of the ancient writers do so frequently express the fall of Adam by our apostasy from God, and our recovery by a recapitulation in Christ, as Irenæus —his recapitulation being nothing but the ἀνακεφαλαίωσις mentioned by the apostle, Eph. i. 10—and he here affirms, that, unto this end, the Lord was made flesh; "secundum principalem plasmationem," as his words are rendered; that is plainly, the original creation of our nature in innocency, uprightness, purity, and righteousness.) "So he saved in himself in the end, what perished in Adam at the beginning." (The same nature, in and by the same nature.) "For if the Lord had been incarnate for any other disposition," (*i. e.*, cause, reason, or end,) "and had brought flesh from any other substance," (*i. e.*, celestial or ethereal, as the Gnostics imagined,) "he had not recovered men, brought our nature unto a head in himself, nor could he have been said to be flesh. He therefore himself had flesh and blood not of any other kind; but he took to himself that which was originally created of the Father, seeking that which was lost." The same is observed by Augustine: (Lib. de Fide, ad Petrum Diaconum:) "Sic igitur Christum Dei Filium, id est, unam ex Trinitate personam, Deum verum crede, ut divinitatem ejus de naturâ Patris natam esse non dubites; et sic eum verum hominem crede, et ejus carnem, non cœlestis, non aeriæ, non alterius cujusquam putes esse naturæ, sed ejus cujus est omnium caro; id est, quam ipse Deus, homini primo de terra plasmavit, et cæteris hominibus plasmat."—"So believe Christ the Son of God, that is, one person of the Trinity, to be the true God, that you doubt not but that his divinity was born" (by eternal generation) "of the nature of the Father; and so believe him to be a true man, that you suppose not his flesh to be aerial, or heavenly, or of any other nature, but of that which is the flesh of men; that is, which God himself formed in the first man of the earth, and which he forms in all other men." That which he speaks of one person of the Trinity, hath respect unto the heretical opinion of Hormisdas, the bishop of Rome, who contended that it was unlawful to say that one person of the Trinity was incarnate, and persecuted some Scythian monks, men not unlearned about it, who were strenuously defended by Maxentius, one of them.

It carrieth in it a great condecency unto divine wisdom, that man should be restored unto the image of God by him who was the essential image of the Father; (as is declared in our discourse;) and

that he was made like unto us, that we might be made like unto him, and unto God through him. So speaks the same Irenæus: (lib. v. Præfat.:) "Verbum Dei Jesus Christus, qui propter immensam suam dilectionem, factus est quod sumus nos, ut nos perficeret quod est ipse." —"Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who, from his own infinite love, was made what we are, that he might make us what he is;" that is, by the restoration of the image of God in us. And again: (lib. iii. cap. 20:) "Filius Dei existens semper apud Patrem, et homo factus, longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulavit; in compendio nobis salutem præstans, ut quod perdideramus in Adam, id est, secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Jesu reciperemus. Quia enim non erat possibile, eum hominem, qui semel victus fuerat et elisus per inobedientiam, replasmare et obtinere brabium (βραβεῖον) victoriæ; iterum autem impossibile erat ut salutem perciperet, qui sub peccato ceciderat. Utraque operatus est filius Verbum Dei existens, a Patre descendens et incarnatus, et usque ad mortem descendens, et dispensationem consummans salutis nostræ."—"Being the Son of God always with the Father, and being made man, he reconciled or gathered up in himself the long-continued exposing of men," (unto sin and judgment,) "bringing in salvation in this compendious way, (in this summary of it,) that what we had lost in Adam—that is, our being in the image and likeness of God—we should recover in Christ. For it was not possible that man that had been once conquered and broken by disobedience, should by himself be reformed, and obtain the crown of victory; nor, again, was it possible that he should recover salvation who had fallen under sin. Both were wrought by the Son, the Word of God, who, descending from the Father, and being incarnate, submitted himself to death, perfecting the dispensation of our salvation."

And Clemens Alexandrinus to the same purpose: (Adhort. ad Gentes:) Ναί φήμι ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος γενομένος, ἵνα δὲ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῇ ποτε ἄρα ἄνθρωπος γένηται Θεός.—"The Word of God was made man, that thou mightest learn of a man how man may become" (as) "God." And Ambrose, in Ps. cxviii. Octonar. decim.: [of the authorized English version, Ps. cxix. 73:] "Imago, [id est, Verbum Dei,] ad eum qui est ad imaginem, [hoc est, hominem,] venit, et quærit imago eum qui est ad similitudinem sui, ut iterum signet, ut iterum confirmet, quia amiseras quod accepisti."—"The image of God, that is, the Word of God, came unto him who was after the image of God, that is man. And this image of God seeks him who was after the image of God, that he might seal him with it again, and confirm him, because thou hadst lost that which thou hadst received." And Augustine in one instance gives a rational account why it was condecent unto divine wisdom that the Son, and

not the Father or the Holy Spirit, should be incarnate—which we also inquire into: (Lib. de Definitionibus Orthodoxae Fidei sive de Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus, cap. ii. :) "Non Pater carnem assumpsit, neque Spiritus Sanctus, sed Filius tantum; ut qui erat in divinitate Dei Patris Filius, ipse fieret in homine hominis matris Filius; ne Filii nomen ad alterum transiret, qui non esset æternâ nativitate filius."—"The Father did not assume flesh, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son only; that he who in the Deity was the Son of the Father, should be made the Son of man, in his mother of human race; that the name of the Son should not pass unto any other, who was not the Son by an eternal nativity."

I shall close with one meditation of the same author, concerning the wisdom and righteousness of God in this mystery: (Enchirid. ad Laurent., cap. xcix.:) "Vide—universum genus humanum tam justo judicio Divino in apostaticâ radice damnatum, ut etiam si nullus inde liberaretur, nemo recte possit Dei vituperare justitiam; et qui liberantur, sic oportuisse liberari, ut ex pluribus non liberatis, atque in damnatione justissimâ derelictis, ostenderetur, quod meruisset universa conspersio, et quò etiam istos debitum judicium Dei duceret, nisi ejus indebita misericordia subveniret."—"Behold, the whole race of mankind, by the just judgment of God, so condemned in the apostatical root, that if no one were thence delivered, yet no man could rightly complain of the justice of God; and that those who are freed, ought so to be freed, that, from the greater number who are not freed, but left under most righteous condemnation, it might be manifest what the whole mass had deserved, and whither the judgment of God due unto them would lead them, if his mercy, which was not due, did not relieve them." The reader may see what is discoursed unto these purposes: and because the great end of the description given of the person of Christ, is that we may love him, and thereby be transformed into his image, I shall close this preface with the words of Jerome, concerning that divine love unto Christ which is at large declared. "Sive legas," saith he, "sive scribas, sive vigiles, sive dormias, amor tibi semper buccina in auribus sonet, hic lituus excitet animam tuam, hoc amore furibundus; quære in lectulo tuo, quem desiderat anima tua:" Epist. lxvi. ad Pammach., cap. 10.—"Whether thou readest or writest, whether thou watchest or sleepest, let the voice of love (to Christ) sound in thine ears; let this trumpet stir up thy soul: being overpowered (brought into an ecstasy) with this love, seek Him on thy bed whom thy soul desireth and longeth for."

A DECLARATION

OF THE

GLORIOUS MYSTERY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

Peter's Confession; Matt. xvi. 16.—Conceits of the Papists thereon—The Substance and Exeellency of that Confession.

Our blessed Saviour, inquiring of his disciples their apprehensions concerning his person, and their faith in him, Simon Peter—as he was usually the forwardest on all such occasions, through his peculiar endowments of faith and zeal—returns an answer in the name of them all, Matt. xvi. 16: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Baronius, and sundry others of the Roman Church, do affirm that the Lord Christ did herein prescribe the form of a general council. "For here," say they, "the principal article of our Christian faith was declared and determined by Peter, whereunto all the rest of the apostles, as in duty they were obliged, did give their consent and suffrage." This was done, as they suppose, that a rule and law might be given unto future ages, how to enact and determine articles of faith. For it is to be done by the successors of Peter presiding in councils, as it was now done by Peter in this assembly of Christ and his apostles.

But they seem to forget that Christ himself was now present, and therefore could have no vicar, seeing he presided in his own person. All the claim they lay unto the necessity of such a visible head of the church on the earth, as may determine articles of faith, is from the absence of Christ since his ascension into heaven. But that he should also have a substitute whilst he was present, is somewhat uncouth; and whilst they live, they shall never make the pope president where Christ is present. The truth is, he doth not propose unto his disciples the framing of an article of truth,* but inquires after their own faith, which they expressed in this confession. Such

* [Faith?]

things as these will prejudice, carnal interest, and the prepossession of the minds of men with corrupt imaginations, cause them to adventure on, to the scandal, yea, ruin of religion!

This short but illustrious confession of Peter, compriseth eminently the whole truth concerning the person and office of Christ:—of his person, in that although he was the Son of man, (under which appellation he made his inquiry, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?") yet was he not only so, but the eternal Son of the living God:—of his office, that he was the Christ, he whom God had anointed to be the Saviour of the church, in the discharge of his kingly, priestly, and prophetical power. Instances of the like brief confessions we have elsewhere in the Scripture. Rom. x. 9: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." 1 John iv. 2, 3: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." And it is manifest, that all divine truths have such a concatenation among themselves, and do all of them so centre in the person of Christ—as vested with his offices towards the church—that they are all virtually comprised in this confession, and they will be so accounted by all who destroy them not by contrary errors and imaginations inconsistent with them, though it be the duty of all men to obtain the express knowledge of them in particular, according unto the means thereof which they do enjoy. The danger of men's souls lieth not in a disability to attain a comprehension of longer or more subtile confessions of faith, but in embracing things contrary unto, or inconsistent with, this foundation thereof. Whatever it be whereby men cease to hold the Head, how small soever it seem, that alone is pernicious: Col. ii. 18, 19.

This confession, therefore,—as containing the sum and substance of that faith which they were called to give testimony unto, and concerning which their trial was approaching—is approved by our Saviour. And not only so, but eminent privileges are granted unto him that made it, and in him unto the whole church, that should live in the same faith and confession: (verses 17, 18:) "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Two things doth our Saviour consider in the answer returned unto his inquiry. 1. The faith of Peter in this confession—the faith of him that made it; 2. The nature and truth of the confession: both

which are required in all the disciples of Christ—"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation:" Rom. x. 10.

1. The first thing which he speaks unto is the faith of Peter, who made this confession. Without this no outward confession is of any use or advantage. For even the devils knew him to be the Holy One of God; (Luke iv. 34;) yet would he not permit them to speak it: Mark i. 34. That which gives glory unto God in any confession, and which gives us an interest in the truth confessed, is the believing of the heart, which is unto righteousness. With respect hereunto the Lord Christ speaks: (verse 17:) "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

He commends and sets forth the faith of Peter—(1.) From its effect; (2.) From its cause. Its effect was, that it made him blessed in whom it was. For it is not only a blessed thing to believe and know Jesus Christ, as it is called life eternal; (John xvii. 3;) but it is that which gives an immediate interest in the blessed state of adoption, justification, and acceptance with God: John i. 12. (2.) The immediate cause of this faith is divine revelation. It is not the effect or product of our own abilities, the best of which are but flesh and blood. That faith which renders them blessed in whom it is, is wrought in them by the power of God revealing Christ unto their souls. Those who have more abilities of their own unto this end than Peter had, we are not concerned in.

2. He speaks unto the confession itself, acquainting his disciples with the nature and use of it, which, from the beginning, he principally designed: (verse 18:) "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

From the speaking of these words unto Peter, there is a controversy raised in the world, whether the Lord Christ himself, or the pope of Rome, be the rock whereon the church is built. And unto that state are things come in religion, among them that are called Christians, that the greatest number are for the pope and against Christ in this matter. And they have good reason for their choice. For if Christ be the rock whereon the church is built, whereas he is a living stone, those that are laid and built on him must be lively stones also, as this apostle assures us, 1 Epist. ii. 4, 5; they must be like unto Christ himself, partaking of his nature, quickened by his Spirit, so, as it were, to be bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh: Eph. v. 30. Nor can any be built on him but by a living faith, effectual in universal obedience. These things the generality of men like not at all; and, therefore, the fabric of the living temple

on this foundation is usually but small, seldom conspicuous or outwardly glorious. But if the pope be this rock, all the Papists in the world, or all that have a mind so to be—be they ever so wicked and ungodly—may be built upon him, and be made partakers of all that deliverance from the powers of hell which that rock can afford them. And all this may be obtained at a very easy rate; for the acknowledgment of the pope's sovereign authority in the church is all that is required thereunto. How they bring in the claim of their pope by Peter, his being at Rome, being bishop of Rome, dying at Rome, fixing his chair at Rome, devoting and transmitting all his right, title, power, and authority, every thing but his faith, holiness, and labour in the ministry, unto the pope, I shall not here inquire; I have done it elsewhere. Here is fixed the root of the tree, which is grown great, like that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, until it is become a receptacle for the beasts of the field and fowls of the air—sensual men and unclean spirits. I shall, therefore, briefly lay an axe unto the root of it, by evidencing that it is not the person of Peter who confessed Christ, but the person of Christ whom Peter confessed, that is the rock on which the church is built.

1. The variation of the expressions proves undeniably that our Saviour intended we should not understand the person of Peter to be the rock. He takes occasion from his name to declare what he designed, but no more: "And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter." He had given him this name before, at his first calling; (John i. 42;) now he gives the reason of his so doing; viz., because of the illustrious confession that he should make of the rock of the church; as the name of God under the Old Testament was called on persons, and things, and places, because of some especial relation unto him. Wherefore, the expression is varied on purpose to declare, that whatever be the signification of the name Peter, yet the person so called was not the rock intended. The words are, Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ. Had he intended the person of Peter, he would have expressed it plainly, Σὺ εἶ πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ σοὶ, κ.τ.λ.—"Thou art a rock, and on thee will I build." At least the gender had not been altered, but he would have said, Ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ πέτρῳ, which would have given some colour to this imagination. The exception which they lay hereunto, from the use of Cephas in the Syriac, which was the name of Peter, and signifies a rock or a stone, lies not only against the authentic authority of the Greek original, but of their own translation of it, which reads the words, "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram."

2. If the church was built on the person of Peter, then when he died the church must utterly fail. For no building can possibly abide when its foundation is removed and taken away. Wherefore

they tell us they do not intend by the person of Peter, that singular and individual person alone to be this rock; but that he and his successors the bishops of Rome are so. But this story of his successors at Rome is a shameful fable. If the pope of Rome be a true believer, he succeeds, in common with all other believers, unto the privileges which belong unto this confession; if he be not, he hath neither lot nor portion in this matter. But the pretence is utterly vain on another account also. The apostle, showing the insufficiency of the Aaronical priesthood—wherein there was a succession of God's own appointment—affirms, that it could not bring the church unto a perfect state, because the high priests died one after another, and so were many: Heb. vii. 8, 23, 24. And thereon he shows that the church cannot be consummated or perfected, unless it rest wholly in and on him who lives for ever, and was made a priest "after the power of an endless life." And if the Holy Ghost judged the state of the Jewish Church to be weak and imperfect —because it rested on high priests that died one after another, although their succession was expressly ordained of God himself—shall we suppose that the Lord Christ, who came to consummate the church, and to bring it unto the most perfect estate whereof in this world it is capable, should build it on a succession of dying men, concerning which succession there is not the least intimation that it is appointed of God? And as unto the matter of fact, we know both what interruptions it hath received, and what monsters it hath produced—both sufficiently manifesting that it is not of God.

3. There is but one rock, but one foundation. There is no mention in the Scripture of two rocks of the church. In what others invent to this purpose we are not concerned. And the rock and the foundation are the same; for the rock is that whereon the church is built, that is the foundation. But that the Lord Christ is this single rock and foundation of the church, we shall prove immediately. Wherefore, neither Peter himself, nor his pretended successors, can be this rock. As for any other rock, it belongs not unto our religion; they that have framed it may use it as they please. For they that make such things are like unto the things they make; so is every one that trusteth in them: Ps. cxv. 8. "But their rock is not as our rock, themselves being judges;" unless they will absolutely equal the pope unto Jesus Christ.

4. Immediately after this declaration of our Saviour's purpose to build his church on the rock, he reveals unto his disciples the way and manner how he would lay its foundation, viz., in his death and sufferings: verse 21. And thereon this supposed rock, being a little left unto his own stability, showed himself to be but a "reed shaken with the wind." For he is so far from putting himself under the

weight of the building, that he attempts an obstruction of its foundation. He began to rebuke Christ himself for mentioning his sufferings, wherein alone the foundation of the Gospel Church was to be laid; (verse 22;) and hereon he received the severest rebuke that ever the Lord Jesus gave unto any of his disciples: verse 23. And so it is known that afterward—through surprisal and temptation—he did what lay in him to recall that confession which here he made, and whereon the church was to be built. For, that no flesh might glory in itself, he that was singular in this confession of Christ, was so also in the denial of him. And if he in his own person manifested how unmeet he was to be the foundation of the church, they must be strangely infatuated who can suppose his pretended successors so to be. But some men will rather have the church to be utterly without any foundation, than that it should not be the pope.

The vanity of this pretence being removed, the substance of the great mystery contained in the attestation given by our Saviour unto the confession of Peter, and the promise thereunto annexed, may be comprised in the ensuing assertions:—

1. The person of Christ, the Son of the living God, as vested with his offices, whereunto he was called and anointed, is the foundation of the church, the rock whereon it is built.

2. The power and policy of hell will be always engaged in opposition unto the relation of the church unto this foundation, or the building of it on this rock.

3. The church that is built on this rock shall never be disjoined from it, or prevailed against by the opposition of the gates of hell.

The two former of these I shall speak briefly unto, my principal design being the demonstration of a truth that ariseth from the consideration of them all.

The foundation of the church is twofold: (1.) Real; (2.) Doctrinal. And in both ways, Christ alone is the foundation. The real foundation of the church he is, by virtue of the mystical union of it unto him, with all the benefits whereof, from thence and thereby, it is made partaker. For thence alone hath it spiritual life, grace, mercy, perfection, and glory: Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19. And he is the doctrinal foundation of it, in that the faith or doctrine concerning him and his offices is that divine truth which in a peculiar manner animates and constitutes the Church of the New Testament: Eph. ii. 19–22. Without the faith and confession hereof, no one person belongs unto that church. I know not what is now believed, but I judge it will not yet be denied, that the external formal cause of the Church of the New Testament, is the confession of the faith concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, with what is of us required thereon. In what sense we assert these things will be afterwards fully cleared.

That the Lord Christ is thus the foundation of the church, is testified unto, Isa. xxviii. 16: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." It is among the bold inroads that in this late age have been made on the vitals of religion, that some, in compliance with the Jews, have attempted the application of this promise unto Hezekiah. The violence they have offered herein to the mind of the Holy Ghost, might be evidenced from every word of the context. But the interpretation and application of the last words of this promise by the apostles, leaves no pretence unto this insinuation. "He that believes on him shall not be ashamed" or "confounded," Rom. ix. 33, x. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 6; that is, he shall be eternally saved—which it is the highest blasphemy to apply unto any other but Jesus Christ alone. He, therefore, is alone that foundation which God hath laid in and of the church. See Ps. cxviii. 22; Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 4; Eph. ii. 20–22; Zech. iii. 9. But this fundamental truth—of Christ being the only foundation of the church—is so expressly determined by the apostle Paul, as not to need any farther confirmation, 1 Cor. iii. 11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER II.

Opposition made unto the Church as Built upon the Person of Christ.

There are in the words of our Saviour unto Peter concerning the foundation of the church, a promise of its preservation, and a prediction of the opposition that should be made thereunto. And, accordingly, all things are come to pass, and carrying on towards a complete accomplishment. For (that we may begin with the opposition foretold) the power and policy of hell ever were, and ever will be, engaged in opposition unto the church built on this foundation—that is, the faith of it concerning his person, office, and grace, whereby it is built on him. This, as unto what is past, concerneth matter of fact, whereof, therefore, I must give a brief account; and then we shall examine what evidences we have of the same endeavour at present.

The gates of hell, as all agree, are the power and policy of it, or the actings of Satan, both as a lion and as a serpent, by rage and by subtlety. But whereas in these things he acts not visibly in his own

person, but by his agents, he hath always had two sorts of them employed in his service. By the one he executes his rage, and by the other his craft; he animates the one as a lion, the other as a serpent. In the one he acts as the dragon, in the other as the beast that had two horns like the lamb, but spake like the dragon. The first is the unbelieving world; the other, apostates and seducers of all sorts. Wherefore, this work in this kind is of a double nature;—the one, an effect of his power and rage, acted by the world in persecution—the other, of his policy and craft, acted by heretics in seduction. In both he designs to separate the church from its foundation.

The opposition of the first sort he began against the person of Christ immediately in his human nature. Fraud first he once attempted in his temptation, (Matt. iv.,) but quickly found that that way he could make no approach unto him. The prince of this world came, but had nothing in him. Wherefore he betook himself unto open force, and, by all means possible, sought his destruction. So also the more at any time the church is by faith and watchfulness secured against seduction, the more doth he rage against it in open persecution. And (for the example and comfort of the church in its conformity unto Christ) no means were left unattempted that might instigate and prepare the world for his ruin. Reproaches, contempt, scorn, false and lying accusations—by his suggestions—were heaped on him on every hand. Hereby, in the whole course of his ministry, he "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself:" Heb. xii. 3. And there is herein blessed provision made of inestimable consolation, for all those who are "predestinated to be conformed unto his image," when God shall help them by faith to make use of his example. He calls them to take up his cross and follow him; and he hath showed them what is in it, by his own bearing of it. Contempt, reproach, despiteful usage, calumnies, false accusations, wrestings of his words, blaspheming of his doctrine, reviling of his person, all that he said and did as to his principles about human government and moral conversation, encompassed him all his days. And he hath assured his followers, that such, and no other, (at least for the most part,) shall be their lot in this world. And some in all ages have an experience of it in an eminent manner. But have they any reason to complain? Why should the servant look for better measure than the Master met withal? To be made like unto him in the worst of evils, for his sake, is the best and most honourable condition in this world. God help some to believe it! Hereby was way made for his death. But, in the whole, it was manifested how infinitely, in all his subtlety and malice, Satan falls short of the contrivances of divine wisdom and power. For all that he attained by effecting his death, in the hour

of darkness, was but the breaking of his own head, the destruction of his works, with the ruin of his kingdom; and what yet remains to consummate his eternal misery, he shall himself work out in his opposition unto the church. His restless malice and darkness will not suffer him to give over the pursuit of his rage, until nothing remains to give him a full entrance into endless torments—which he hasteneth every day. For when he shall have filled up the measure of his sins, and of the sins of the world in being instrumental unto his rage, eternal judgment shall put all things unto their issue. Through that shall he, with the world, enter into everlasting flames—and the whole church, built on the rock, into rest and glory.

No sooner did the Church of the New Testament begin to arise on this foundation, but the whole world of Jews and Gentiles set themselves with open force to destroy it. And all that they contended with the church about, was their faith and confession of it, that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God." This foundation they would cast it from, or exterminate it out of the earth. What were the endeavours of the gates of hell in this kind—with what height of rage, with what bloody and inhuman cruelties they were exercised and executed—we have some obscure remembrance, in the stories that remain from the martyrdom of Stephen unto the days of Constantine. But although there be enough remaining on record, to give us a view of the insatiable malice of the old murderer, and an astonishing representation of human nature degenerating into his image in the perpetration of all horrid, inhuman cruelties—yet is it all as nothing in comparison of that prospect which the last day will give of them, when the earth shall disclose all the blood that it hath received, and the righteous Judge shall lay open all the contrivances for its effusion, with the rage and malice wherewith they were attended. The same rage continueth yet unallayed in its principles. And although God in many places restrain and shut it up in his providence, by the circumstances of human affairs, yet—as it hath the least advantage, as it finds any door open unto it—it endeavours to act itself in lesser or higher degrees. But whatever dismal appearance of things there may be in the world, we need not fear the ruin of the church by the most bloody oppositions. Former experiences will give security against future events. It is built on the rock, and those gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The second way whereby Satan attempted the same end, and yet continueth so to do, was by pernicious errors and heresies. For all the heresies wherewith the church was assaulted and pestered for some centuries of years, were oppositions unto their faith in the person of Christ. I shall briefly reflect on the heads of this opposition,

because they are now, after a revolution of so many ages, lifting up themselves again, though under new vizards and pretences. And they were of three sorts:—

1. That which introduced other doctrines and notions of divine things, absolutely exclusive of the person and mediation of Christ. Such was that of the Gnostics, begun as it is supposed by Simon the magician. A sort of people they were, with whom the first churches, after the decease of the apostles, were exceedingly pestered, and the faith of many was overthrown. For instead of Christ, and God in him reconciling the world unto himself, and the obedience of faith thereon according unto the Gospel, they introduced endless fables, genealogies, and conjugations of deities, or divine powers; which practically issued in this, that Christ was such an emanation of light and knowledge in them as made them perfect—that is, it took away all differences of good and evil, and gave them liberty to do what they pleased, without sense of sin, or danger of punishment. This was the first way that Satan attempted the faith of the church, viz., by substituting a perfecting light and knowledge in the room of the person of Christ. And, for aught I know, it may be one of the last ways whereby he will endeavour the accomplishment of the same design. Nor had I made mention of these pernicious imaginations, which have lain rotting in oblivion for so many generations, but that some again endeavour to revive them, at least so far as they were advanced and directed against the faith and knowledge of the person of Christ.

2. Satan attempted the same work by them who denied his divine nature—that is, in effect, denied him to be the Son of the living God, on the faith whereof the church is built. And these were of two sorts:—

(1.) Such as plainly and openly denied him to have any pre-existence unto his conception and birth of the holy Virgin. Such were the Ebionites, Samosatanians, and Photinians. For they all affirmed him to be a mere man, and no more, though miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin, as some of them granted; (though denied, as it is said, by the Ebionites;) on which account he was called the Son of God. This attempt lay directly against the everlasting rock, and would have substituted sand in the room of it. For no better is the best of human nature to make a foundation for the church, if not united unto the divine. Many in those days followed those pernicious ways; yet the foundation of God stood sure, nor was the church moved from it. But yet, after a revolution of so many ages, is the same endeavour again engaged in. The old enemy, taking advantage of the prevalency of Atheism and profaneness among those that are called Christians, doth again employ the same

engine to overthrow the faith of the church—and that with more subtlety than formerly—in the Socinians. For their faith, or rather unbelief, concerning the person of Christ, is the same with those before mentioned. And what a vain, wanton generation admire and applaud in their sophistical reasonings, is no more but what the primitive church triumphed over through faith, in the most subtle management of the Samosatanians, Photinians, and others. An evidence it is that Satan is not unknowing unto the workings of that vanity and darkness, of those corrupt affections in the minds of men, whereby they are disposed unto a contempt of the mystery of the Gospel. Who would have thought that the old exploded pernicious errors of the Samosatanians, Photinians, and Pelagians, against the power and grace of Christ, should enter on the world again with so much ostentation and triumph as they do at this day? But many men, so far as I can observe, are fallen into such a dislike of the Christ of God, that every thing concerning his person, Spirit, and grace, is an abomination unto them. It is not want of understanding to comprehend doctrines, but hatred unto the things themselves, whereby such persons are seduced. And there is nothing of this nature whereunto nature, as corrupted, doth not contribute its utmost assistance.

(2.) There were such as opposed his divine nature, under pretence of declaring it another way than the faith of the church did rest in. So was it with the Arians, in whom the gates of hell seemed once to be near a prevalency. For the whole professing world almost was once surprised into that heresy. In words they acknowledged his divine person; but added, as a limitation of that acknowledgment, that the divine nature which he had was originally created of God, and produced out of nothing; with a double blasphemy, denying him to be the true God, and making a god of a mere creature. But in all these attempts, the opposition of the gates of hell unto the church respected faith in the person of Christ as the Son of the living God.

(3.) By some his human nature was opposed—for no stone did Satan leave unturned in the pursuit of his great design. And that which in all these things he aimed at, was the substitution of a false Christ in the room of Him who, in one person, was both the Son of man and the Son of the living God. And herein he infected the minds of men with endless imaginations. Some denied him to have any real human nature, but [alleged him] to have been a phantasm, an appearance, a dispensation, a mere cloud acted by divine power; some, that he was made of heavenly flesh, brought from above, and which (as some also affirmed) was a parcel of the divine nature. Some affirmed that his body was not animated, as ours are, by a

rational soul, but was immediately acted by the power of the Divine Being, which was unto it in the room of a living soul; some, that his body was of an ethereal nature, and was at length turned into the sun; with many such diabolical delusions. And there yet want not attempts, in these days, of various sorts, to destroy the verity of his human nature; and I know not what some late fantastical opinions about the nature of glorified bodies may tend unto. The design of Satan, in all these pernicious imaginations, is to break the cognation and alliance between Christ in his human nature and the church, whereon the salvation of it doth absolutely depend.

3. He raised a vehement opposition against the hypostatical union, or the union of these two natures in one person. This he did in the Nestorian heresy, which greatly, and for a long time, pestered the church. The authors and promoters of this opinion granted the Lord Christ to have a divine nature, to be the Son of the living God. They also acknowledged the truth of his human nature, that he was truly a man, even as we are. But the personal union between these two natures they denied. A union, they said, there was between them, but such as consisted only in love, power, and care. God did, as they imagined, eminently and powerfully manifest himself in the man Christ Jesus—had him in an especial regard and love, and did act in him more than in any other. But that the Son of God assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself—whereby whole Christ was one person, and all his mediatory acts were the acts of that one person, of him who was both God and man—this they would not acknowledge. And this pernicious imagination, though it seem to make great concessions of truth, doth no less effectually evert the foundation of the church than the former. For, if the divine and human nature of Christ do not constitute one individual person, all that he did for us was only as a man—which would have been altogether insufficient for the salvation of the church, nor had God redeemed it with his own blood. This seems to be the opinion of some amongst us, at this day, about the person of Christ. They acknowledge the being of the eternal Word, the Son of God; and they allow in the like manner the verity of his human nature, or own that man Christ Jesus. Only they say, that the eternal Word was in him and with him, in the same kind as it is with other believers, but in a supreme degree of manifestation and power. But, though in these things there is a great endeavour to put a new colour and appearance on old imaginations, the design of Satan is one and the same in them all, viz., to oppose the building of the church upon its proper, sole foundation. And these things shall be afterward expressly spoken unto.

I intend no more in these instances but briefly to demonstrate,

that the principal opposition of the gates of hell unto the church lay always unto the building of it, by faith, on the person of Christ.

It were easy also to demonstrate that Mohammedanism, which hath been so sore a stroke unto the Christian profession, is nothing but a concurrence and combination of these two ways, of force and fraud, in opposition unto the person of Christ.

It is true that Satan, after all this, by another way, attempted the doctrine of the offices and grace of Christ, with the worship of God in him. And this he hath carried so far, as that it issued in a fatal antichristian apostasy; which is not of my present consideration.

But we may proceed to what is of our own immediate concernment. And the same work with that before described is still carried on. The person of Christ, the faith of the church concerning it, the relation of the church unto it, the building of the church on it, the life and preservation of the church thereby, are the things that the gates of hell are engaged in opposition unto. For,

1. It is known with what subtlety and urgency his divine nature and person are opposed by the Socinians. What an accession is made daily unto their incredulity, what inclination of mind multitudes do manifest towards their pernicious ways, are also evident unto all who have any concernment in or for religion. But this argument I have laboured in on other occasions.

2. Many, who expressly deny not his divine person, yet seem to grow weary of any concernment therein. A natural religion, or none at all, pleaseth them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That any thing more is necessary in religion, but what natural light will discover and conduct us in, with the moral duties of righteousness and honesty which it directs unto, there are too many that will not acknowledge. What is beyond the line of nature and reason is rejected as unintelligible mysteries or follies. The person and grace of Christ are supposed to breed all the disturbance in religion. Without them, the common notions of the Divine Being and goodness will guide men sufficiently unto eternal blessedness. They did so before the coming of Christ in the flesh, and may do so now he is gone to heaven.

3. There are some who have so ordered the frame of objective religion, as that it is very uncertain whether they leave any place for the person of Christ in it or no. For, besides their denial of the hypostatical union of his natures, they ascribe all that unto a light within them which God will effect only by Christ as a mediator. What are the internal actings of their minds, as unto faith and trust towards him, I know not; but, from their outward profession, he seems to be almost excluded.

4. There are not a few who pretend high unto religion and devo-

tion, who declare no erroneous conceptions about the doctrine of the person of Christ, who yet manifest themselves not to have that regard unto him which the Gospel prescribes and requires. Hence have we so many discourses published about religion, the practical holiness and duties of obedience, written with great elegancy of style, and seriousness in argument, wherein we can meet with little or nothing wherein Jesus Christ, his office, or his grace, are concerned. Yea, it is odds but in them all we shall meet with some reflections on those who judge them to be the life and centre of our religion. The things of Christ, beyond the example of his conversation on the earth, are of no use with such persons, unto the promotion of piety and Gospel obedience. Concerning many books of this nature, we may say what a learned person did of one of old: "There were in it many things laudable and delectable, sed nomen Jesu non erat ibi."

5. Suited unto these manifest inclinations of the minds of men unto a neglect of Christ, in the religion they frame unto themselves —dangerous and noxious insinuations concerning what our thoughts ought to be of him, are made and tendered. As, (1.) It is scandalously proposed and answered, "Of what use is the consideration of the person of Christ in our religion?" Such are the novel inquiries of men who suppose there is any thing in Christian religion wherein the person of Christ is of no consideration—as though it were not the life and soul that animates the whole of it, that which gives it its especial form as Christian—as though by virtue of our religion we received any thing from God, any benefit in mercy, grace, privilege, or glory, and not through the person of Christ—as though any one duty or act of religion towards God could be acceptably performed by us, without a respect unto, or a consideration of, the person of Christ—or that there were any lines of truth in religion as it is Christian, that did not relate thereunto. Such bold inquiries, with futilous answers annexed unto them, sufficiently manifest what acquaintance their authors have either with Christ himself, which in others they despise, or with his Gospel, which they pretend to embrace. (2.) A mock scheme of religion is framed, to represent the folly of them who design to learn the mind and will of God in and by him. (3.) Reproachful reflections are made on such as plead the necessity of acquaintance with him, or the knowledge of him, as though thereby they rejected the use of the Gospel. (4.) Professed love unto the person of Christ is traduced, as a mere fancy and vapour of distempered minds or weak imaginations. (5.) The union of the Lord Christ and his church is asserted to be political only, with respect unto laws and rules of government. And many other things of an alike nature are asserted, derogatory unto his glory, and repugnant unto the faith

of the church; such as, from the foundation of Christian religion, were never vented by any persons before, who did not openly avow some impious heresy concerning his person. And I no way doubt but that men may, with less guilt and scandal, fall under sundry doctrinal misapprehensions concerning it—than, by crying hail thereunto, to despoil it of all its glory, as unto our concernment therein, in our practical obedience unto God. Such things have we deserved to see and hear.

6. The very name or expression of "preaching Christ" is become a term of reproach and contempt; nor can some, as they say, understand what is meant thereby, unless it be an engine to drive all rational preaching, and so all morality and honesty, out of the world.

7. That which all these things tend unto and centre in, is that horrible profaneness of life—that neglect of all Gospel duties—that contempt of all spiritual graces and their effects, which the generality of them that are called Christians, in many places, are given up unto. I know not whether it were not more for the honour of Christ, that such persons would publicly renounce the profession of his name, rather than practically manifest their inward disregard unto him.

That by these and the like means Satan doth yet attempt the ruin of the church, as unto its building on the everlasting rock, falls under the observation of all who are concerned in its welfare. And (whatever others may apprehend concerning this state of things in the world) how any that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity—especially such as are called to declare and represent him unto men in the office of the ministry—can acquit themselves to be faithful unto him, without giving their testimony against, and endeavouring to stop what lies in them, the progress of this prevailing declension from the only foundation of the church, I know not; nor will it be easy for themselves to declare. And in that variety of conceptions which are about him, and the opposition that is made unto him, there is nothing more necessary than that we should renew and attest our confession of him—as the Son of the living God—the only rock whereon the church of them that shall be saved is founded and built.

"Pauca ideo de Christo," as Tertullian speaks; some few things concerning the person of Christ, with respect unto the confession of Peter, and the promise thereunto annexed—wherein he is declared the sole foundation of the church—will be comprised in the ensuing discourse. And He who hath ordained strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, as he hath given ability to express these poor, mean contemplations of his glory, can raise by them a revenue of honour unto himself in the hearts of them that do believe. And some few things I must premise, in general, unto what I do design. As,

1. The instances which I shall give concerning the use and con-

sideration of the person of Christ in Christian religion, or of him as he is the foundation whereon the church is built, are but few —and those perhaps not the most signal or eminent which the greater spiritual wisdom and understanding of others might propose. And, indeed, who shall undertake to declare what are the chief instances of this incomprehensible effect of divine wisdom? "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" Prov. xxx. 4. See Isa. ix. 6. It is enough for us to stand in a holy admiration, at the shore of this unsearchable ocean, and to gather up some parcels of that divine treasure wherewith the Scripture of truth is enriched.

2. I make no pretence of searching into the bottom or depths of any part of this "great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." They are altogether unsearchable, unto the line of the most enlightened minds, in this life. What we shall farther comprehend of them in the other world, God only knows. We cannot in these things, by our utmost diligent search, "find out the Almighty unto perfection." The prophets could not do so of old, nor can the angels themselves at present, who "desire to look into these things:" 1 Pet. i. 10–12. Only I shall endeavour to represent unto the faith of them that do believe, somewhat of what the Scripture doth plainly reveal—evidencing in what sense the person of Christ is the sole foundation of the church.

3. I shall not, herein, respect them immediately by whom the divine person of Christ is denied and opposed. I have formerly treated thereof, beyond their contradiction in way of reply. But it is their conviction which I shall respect herein, who, under an outward confession of the truth, do—either notionally or practically, either ignorantly or designedly, God knows, I know not—endeavour to weaken the faith of the church in its adherence unto this foundation. Howbeit, neither the one sort nor the other has any place in my thoughts, in comparison of the instruction and edification of others, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

CHAPTER III.

The Person of Christ the most ineffable Effect of Divine Wisdom and Goodness—Thence the next Cause of all True Religion—In what sense it is so.

The person of Christ is the most glorious and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power; and therefore is the next foundation of all acceptable religion and worship. The Divine Being itself

is the first formal reason, foundation, and object of all religion. It all depends on taking God to be our God; which is the first of his commands. For religion, and the worship performed in it, is nothing but the due respect of rational creatures unto the divine nature, and its infinite excellencies. It is the glorifying of God as God; the way of expressing that respect being regulated by the revelation of his will. Yet the divine essence is not, in itself, the next and immediate cause of religious worship. But it is the manifestation of this Being and its excellencies, wherewith the mind of rational creatures is immediately affected, and whereby it is obliged to give that religious honour and worship which is due unto that Being, and necessary from our relation thereunto. Upon this manifestation, all creatures capable by an intelligent nature of a sense thereof, are indispensably obliged to give all divine honour and glory to God.

The way alone whereby this manifestation may be made, is by outward acts and effects. For, in itself, the divine nature is hid from all living, and dwelleth in that light whereunto no creature can approach. This, therefore, God first made, by the creation of all things out of nothing. The creation of man himself—with the principles of a rational, intelligent nature, a conscience attesting his subordination unto God—and the creation of all other things, declaring the glory of his wisdom, goodness, and power, was the immediate ground of all natural religion, and yet continues so to be. And the glory of it answers the means and ways of the manifestation of the Divine Being, existence, excellencies, and properties. And where this manifestation is despised or neglected, there God himself is so; as the apostle discourseth at large, Rom. i. 18–22.

But of all the effects of the divine excellencies, the constitution of the person of Christ as the foundation of the new creation, as "the Mystery of Godliness," was the most ineffable and glorious. I speak not of his divine person absolutely; for his distinct personality and subsistence was by an internal and eternal act of the Divine Being in the person of the Father, or eternal generation—which is essential unto the divine essence—whereby nothing anew was outwardly wrought or did exist. He was not, he is not, in that sense, the effect of the divine wisdom and power of God, but the essential wisdom and power of God himself. But we speak of him only as incarnate, as he assumed our nature into personal subsistence with himself. His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own—by its assumption into personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception—is that which is above all miracles, nor can be designed by that name. A mystery it is, so far above the

order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the properties of the divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wisdom, grace, and condescension. The depths of the mystery hereof are open only unto him whose understanding is infinite, which no created understanding can comprehend. All other things were produced and effected by an outward emanation of power from God. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." But this assumption of our nature into hypostatical union with the Son of God, this constitution of one and the same individual person in two natures so infinitely distinct as those of God and man—whereby the Eternal was made in time, the Infinite became finite, the Immortal mortal, yet continuing eternal, infinite, immortal—is that singular expression of divine wisdom, goodness, and power, wherein God will be admired and glorified unto all eternity. Herein was that change introduced into the whole first creation, whereby the blessed angels were exalted, Satan and his works ruined, mankind recovered from a dismal apostasy, all things made new, all things in heaven and earth reconciled and gathered into one Head, and a revenue of eternal glory raised unto God, incomparably above what the first constitution of all things in the order of nature could yield unto him.

In the expression of this mystery, the Scripture doth sometimes draw the veil over it, as that which we cannot look into. So, in his conception of the Virgin, with respect unto this union which accompanied it, it was told her, that "the power of the Highest should overshadow her:" Luke i. 35. A work it was of the power of the Most High, but hid from the eyes of men in the nature of it; and, therefore, that holy thing which had no subsistence of its own, which should be born of her, should "be called the Son of God," becoming one person with him. Sometimes it expresseth the greatness of the mystery, and leaves it as an object of our admiration, 1 Tim. iii. 16: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." A mystery it is, and that of those dimensions as no creature can comprehend. Sometimes it putteth things together, as that the distance of the two natures shall illustrate the glory of the one person, John i. 14: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." But what Word was this? That which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made; who was light and life. This Word was made flesh, not by any change of his own nature or essence, not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human, not by ceasing to be what he was, but by becoming what he was not, in taking our nature to his own, to be his own, whereby he dwelt

among us. This glorious Word, which is God, and described by his eternity and omnipotency in works of creation and providence, "was made flesh,"—which expresseth the lowest state and condition of human nature. Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness! And in that state wherein he visibly appeared as so made flesh, those who had eyes given them from above, saw "his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." The eternal Word being made flesh, and manifested therein, they saw his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the least part of the glory of this divine wisdom and grace? So also is it proposed unto us, Isa. ix. 6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." He is called, in the first place, Wonderful. And that deservedly: Prov. xxx. 4. That the mighty God should be a child born, and the everlasting Father a son given unto us, may well entitle him unto the name of Wonderful.

Some amongst us say, that if there were no other way for the redemption and salvation of the church, but this only of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, there was no wisdom in the contrivance of it. Vain man indeed would be wise, but is like the wild ass's colt. Was there no wisdom in the contrivance of that which, when it is effected, leaves nothing but admiration unto the utmost of all created wisdom? Who hath known the mind of the Lord in this thing, or who hath been his counsellor in this work, wherein the mighty God became a child born to us, a son given unto us? Let all vain imaginations cease: there is nothing left unto the sons of men, but either to reject the divine person of Christ—as many do unto their own destruction—or humbly to adore the mystery of infinite wisdom and grace therein. And it will require a condescending charity, to judge that those do really believe the incarnation of the Son of God, who live not in the admiration of it, as the most adorable effect of divine wisdom.

The glory of the same mystery is elsewhere testified unto, Heb. i. 1–3: "God hath spoken unto us by his Son, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, by himself purged our sins." That he purged our sins by his death, and the oblation of himself therein unto God, is acknowledged. That this should be done by him by whom the worlds were made, who is the essential brightness of the divine glory, and the express image of the person of the Father therein, who upholds, rules, sustains all things by the word of his power, whereby God purchased his

church with his own blood, (Acts xx. 28,) is that wherein he will be admired unto eternity. See Phil. ii. 6–9.

In Isaiah (chap. vi.) there is a representation made of him as on a throne, filling the temple with the train of his glory. The Son of God it was who was so represented, and that as he was to fill the temple of his human nature with divine glory, when the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. And herein the seraphim, which administered unto him, had six wings, with two whereof they covered their faces, as not being able to behold or look into the glorious mystery of his incarnation: verses 2, 3; John xii. 39–41, ii. 19; Col. ii. 9. But when the same ministering spirits, under the name of cherubim, attended the throne of God, in the administration of his providence as unto the disposal and government of the world, they had four wings only, and covered not their faces, but steadily beheld the glory of it: Ezek. i. 6, x. 2, 3.

This is the glory of the Christian religion—the basis and foundation that bears the whole superstructure—the root whereon it grows. This is its life and soul, that wherein it differs from, and inconceivably excels, whatever was in true religion before, or whatever any false religion pretended unto. Religion, in its first constitution, in the state of pure, uncorrupted nature, was orderly, beautiful, and glorious. Man being made in the image of God, was fit and able to glorify him as God. But whereas, whatever perfection God had communicated unto our nature, he had not united it unto himself in a personal union, the fabric of it quickly fell unto the ground. Want of this foundation made it obnoxious unto ruin. God manifested herein, that no gracious relation between him and our nature could be stable and permanent, unless our nature was assumed into personal union and subsistence with himself. This is the only rock and assured foundation of the relation of the church unto God, which, now, can never utterly fail. Our nature is eternally secured in that union, and we ourselves (as we shall see) thereby. "In him all things consist;" (Col. i. 17, 18;) wherefore, whatever beauty and glory there was in the relation that was between God and man, and the relation of all things unto God by man—in the preservation whereof natural religion did consist—it had no beauty nor glory in comparison of this which doth excel, or the manifestation of God in the flesh—the appearance and subsistence of the divine and human natures in the same single individual person. And whereas God in that state had given man dominion "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth," (Gen. i. 26,) it was all but an obscure representation of the exaltation of our nature in Christ—as the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 6–9.

There was true religion in the world after the fall, both before

and after the giving of the Law; a religion built upon and resolved into divine revelation. And as for the outward glory of it—the administration that it was brought into under the tabernacle and temple—it was beyond what is represented in the institutions of the Gospel. Yet is Christian religion, our evangelical profession, and the state of the church thereon, far more glorious, beautiful, and perfect, than that state of religion was capable of, or could attain. And as this is evident from hence, because God in his wisdom, grace, and love to the church, hath removed *that* state, and introduced *this* in the room thereof; so the apostle proves it—in all considerable instances—in his Epistle to the Hebrews, written unto that purpose. There were two things, before, in religion;—the promise, which was the life of it; and the institutions of worship under the Law, which were the outward glory and beauty of it. And both these were nothing, or had nothing in them, but only what they before proposed and represented of Christ, God manifested in the flesh. The promise was concerning *him*, and the institutions of worship did only represent *him*. So the apostle declares it, Col. ii. 17. Wherefore, as all the religion that was in the world after the fall was built on the promise of this work of God, in due time to be accomplished; so it is the actual performance of it which is the foundation of the Christian religion, and which gives it the pre-eminence above all that went before it. So the apostle expresseth it: (Heb. i. 1–3:) "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

All false religion pretended always unto things that were mysterious. And the more men could invent, or the devil suggest, that had an appearance of that nature, as sundry things were so introduced horrid and dreadful, the more reverence and esteem were reconciled unto it. But the whole compass of the craft of Satan and the imaginations of men could never extend itself unto the least resemblance of this mystery. And it is not amiss conjectured, that the apostle, in his description of it, 1 Tim. iii. 16, did reflect upon and condemn the vanity of the Eleusinian mysteries, which were of the greatest vogue and reputation among the Gentiles.

Take away the consideration hereof, and we despoil the Christian religion of all its glory, debasing it unto what Mohammedanism pretends unto, and unto what in Judaism was really enjoyed.

The faith of this mystery ennobles the mind wherein it is—rendering it spiritual and heavenly, transforming it into the image of God. Herein consists the excellency of faith above all other powers and acts of the soul—that it receives, assents unto, and rests in, things in their own nature absolutely incomprehensible. It is ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, (Heb. xi. 1,)—"The evidence of things not seen"—that which makes evident, as by demonstration, those things which are no way objected unto sense, and which reason cannot comprehend. The more sublime and glorious—the more inaccessible unto sense and reason—the things are which we believe; the more are we changed into the image of God, in the exercise of faith upon them. Hence we find this most glorious effect of faith, or the transformation of the mind into the likeness of God, no less real, evident, and eminent in many, whose rationally comprehensive abilities are weak and contemptible, in the eye of that wisdom which is of this world, than in those of the highest natural sagacity, enjoying the best improvements of reason. For "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom:" James ii. 5. However they may be poor, and, as another apostle speaketh, "foolish, weak, base, and despised;" (1 Cor. i. 27, 28;) yet that faith which enables them to assent unto and embrace divine mysteries, renders them rich in the sight of God, in that it makes them like unto him.

Some would have all things that we are to believe to be levelled absolutely unto our reason and comprehension—a principle which, at this day, shakes the very foundations of the Christian religion. It is not sufficient, they say, to determine that the faith or knowledge of any thing is necessary unto our obedience and salvation, that it seems to be fully and perspicuously revealed in the Scripture—unless the things so revealed be obvious and comprehensible unto our reason; an apprehension which, as it ariseth from the pride which naturally ensues on the ignorance of God and ourselves, so it is not only an invention suited to debase religion, but an engine to evert the faith of the church in all the principal mysteries of the Gospel—especially of the Trinity and the incarnation of the Son of God. But faith which is truly divine, is never more in its proper exercise—doth never more elevate the soul into conformity unto God—than when it acts in the contemplation and admiration of the most incomprehensible mysteries which are proposed unto it by divine revelation.

Hence things philosophical, and of a deep rational indagation, find great acceptance in the world—as, in their proper place, they do deserve. Men are furnished with proper measures of them, and they find them proportionate unto the principles of their own under-

standings. But as for spiritual and heavenly mysteries, the thoughts of men for the most part recoil, upon their first proposal, nor will be encouraged to engage in a diligent inquiry into them—yea, commonly reject them as foolish, or at least that wherein they are not concerned. The reason is that given in another case by the apostle: "All men have not faith;" (2 Thess. iii. 2;) which makes them absurd and unreasonable in the consideration of the proper objects of it. But where this faith is, the greatness of the mysteries which it embraceth heightens its efficacy, in all its blessed effects, upon the soul. Such is this constitution of the person of Christ, wherein the glory of all the holy properties and perfections of the divine nature is manifested, and does shine forth. So speaks the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." This glory which we behold, is the glory of the face of God in Jesus Christ, (chap. iv. 6,) or the glorious representation which is made of him in the person of Christ, whereof we shall treat afterward. The glass wherein this glory is represented unto us—proposed unto our view and contemplation—is divine revelation in the Gospel. Herein we behold it, by faith alone. And those whose view is steadfast, who most abound in that contemplation by the exercise of faith, are thereby "changed into the same image, from glory to glory"—or are more and more renewed and transformed into the likeness of God, so represented unto them.

That which shall, at last, perfectly effect our utmost conformity to God, and, therein, our eternal blessedness—is vision, or sight. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:" 1 John iii. 2. Here faith begins what sight shall perfect hereafter. But yet "we walk by faith, and not by sight:" 2 Cor. v. 7. And although the life of faith and vision differ in degrees—or, as some think, in kind—yet have they both the same object, and the same operations, and there is a great cognation between them. The *object* of vision is the whole mystery of the divine existence and will; and its operation is a perfect conformity unto God—a likeness unto him—wherein our blessedness shall consist. Faith hath the same object, and the same operations in its degree and measure. The great and incomprehensible mysteries of the Divine Being—of the will and wisdom of God—are its proper objects; and its operation, with respect unto us, is conformity and likeness unto him. And this it doth, in a peculiar manner, in the contemplation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and herein we have our nearest approaches unto the life of vision, and the effects of it. For therein, "beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory;" which, perfectly to consummate, is the effect

of sight in glory. The exercise of faith herein doth more raise and perfect the mind—more dispose it unto holy, heavenly frames and affections—than any other duty whatever.

To be nigh unto God, and to be like unto him, are the same. To be always with him, and perfectly like him, according to the capacity of our nature, is to be eternally blessed. To live by faith in the contemplation of the glory of God in Christ, is that initiation into both, whereof we are capable in this world. The endeavours of some to contemplate and report the glory of God in nature—in the works of creation and providence—in the things of the greater and the lesser world—do deserve their just commendation; and it is that which the Scripture in sundry places calls us unto. But for any there to abide, there to bound their designs—when they have a much more noble and glorious object for their meditations, viz., the glory of God in Christ—is both to despise the wisdom of God in that revelation of himself, and to come short of that transforming efficacy of faith in the contemplation hereof, whereby we are made like unto God. For hereunto alone doth it belong, and not unto any natural knowledge, nor to any knowledge of the most secret recesses of nature.

I shall only say, that those who are inconversant with these objects of faith—whose minds are not delighted in the admiration of, and acquiescency in, things incomprehensible, such as is this constitution of the person of Christ—who would reduce all things to the measure of their own understandings, or else wilfully live in the neglect of what they cannot comprehend—do not much prepare themselves for that vision of these things in glory, wherein our blessedness doth consist.

Moreover, this constitution of the person of Christ being the most admirable and ineffable effect of divine wisdom, grace, and power, it is that alone which can bear the weight of the whole superstructure of the mystery of godliness—that whereinto the whole sanctification and salvation of the church is resolved—wherein alone faith can find rest and peace. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ:" 1 Cor. iii. 11. Rest and peace with God is that which we seek after. "What shall we do to be saved?" In this inquiry, the acts of the mediatory office of Christ are, in the Gospel, first presented unto us—especially his oblation and intercession. Through them is he able to save unto the uttermost those that come to God by him. But there were oblations for sin, and intercessions for sinners, under the Old Testament; yet of them all doth the apostle affirm, that they could not make them perfect that came unto God by them, nor take away conscience condemning for sin: Heb. x. 1–4. Where-

fore, it is not these things in themselves that can give us rest and peace, but their relation unto the person of Christ. The oblation and intercession of any other would not have saved us. Hence, for the security of our faith, we are minded that "God redeemed the church with his own blood:" Acts xx. 28. He did so who was God, as he was manifested in the flesh. His blood alone could purge our consciences from dead works, who did offer himself unto God, through the eternal Spirit: Heb. ix. 14. And when the apostle—for our relief against the guilt of sin—calleth us unto the consideration of intercession and propitiation, he mindeth us peculiarly of his person by whom they are performed, 1 John ii. 1, 2: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." And we may briefly consider the order of these things.

1. We suppose, in this case, conscience to be awakened unto a sense of sin, and of apostasy from God thereby. These things are now generally looked on as of no great concernment unto us—by some made a mock of—and, by the most, thought easy to be dealt withal—at time convenient. But when God fixeth an apprehension of his displeasure for them on the soul—if it be not before it be too late—it will cause men to look out for relief.

2. This relief is proposed in the Gospel. And it is the death and mediation of Christ alone. By them peace with God must be obtained, or it will cease for ever. But,

3. When any person comes practically to know how great a thing it is for an apostate sinner to obtain the remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, endless objections through the power of unbelief will arise unto his disquietment. Wherefore,

4. That which is principally suited to give him rest, peace, and satisfaction—and without which nothing else can so do—is the due consideration of, and the acting of faith upon, this infinite effect of divine wisdom and goodness, in the constitution of the person of Christ. This at first view will reduce the mind unto that conclusion, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible." For what end cannot be effected hereby? what end cannot be accomplished that was designed in it? Is any thing too hard for God? Did God ever do any thing like this, or make use of any such means for any other end whatever? Against this no objection can arise. On this consideration of him, faith apprehends Christ to be—as he is indeed—the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto the salvation of them that do believe; and therein doth it find rest with peace.

CHAPTER IV

The Person of Christ the Foundation of all the Counsels of God.

Secondly, The person of Christ is the foundation of all the counsels of God, as unto his own eternal glory in the vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church. That which I intend is what the apostle expresseth, Eph. i. 9, 10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." The "mysteries of the will of God, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself"—are his counsels concerning his own eternal glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church here below, to be united unto that above. The absolute original hereof was in his own good pleasure, or the sovereign acting of his wisdom and will. But it was all to be effected *in Christ*—which the apostle twice repeats: he would gather "all things into a head in Christ, even in him"—that is, in him alone.

Thus it is said of him, with respect unto his future incarnation and work of mediation, that the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; that he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: Prov. viii. 22, 23. The eternal personal existence of the Son of God is supposed in these expressions, as I have elsewhere proved. Without it, none of these things could be affirmed of him. But there is a regard in them, both unto his future incarnation, and the accomplishment of the counsels of God thereby. With respect thereunto, God "possessed him in the beginning of his way, and set him up from everlasting." God possessed him eternally as his essential wisdom—as he was always, and is always, in the bosom of the Father, in the mutual ineffable love of the Father and Son, in the eternal bond of the Spirit. But he signally possessed him "in the beginning of his way"—as his wisdom, acting in the production of all the ways and works that are outwardly of him. The "beginning of God's ways," before his works, are his counsels concerning them—even as our counsels are the beginning of our ways, with respect unto future works. And he "set him up from everlasting," as the foundation of all the counsels of his will, in and by whom they were to be executed and accomplished.

So it is expressed: (verses 30, 31:) "I was by him, as one brought

up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." And it is added, that thus it was before the foundation of the world was laid, or the chiefest part of the dust of the earth was made—that is, [before] man was created. Not only was the delight of the Father in him, but his delight was in the habitable part of the earth, and among the sons of men—before the creation of the world. Wherefore, the eternal prospect of the work he had to do for the children of men is intended herein. In and with him, God laid the foundation of all his counsels concerning his love towards the children of men. And two things may be observed herein.

1. That the person of the Son "was set up," or exalted herein. "I was set up," saith he, "from everlasting." This cannot be spoken absolutely of the person of the Son himself—the divine nature being not capable of being so set up. But there was a peculiar glory and honour belonging unto the person of the Son, as designed by the Father unto the execution of all the counsels of his will. Hence was that prayer of his upon the accomplishment of them: (John xvii. 5:) "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." To suppose that the Lord Christ prayeth, in these words, for such a real communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the human as should render it immense, omniscient, and unconfined unto any space—is to think that he prayed for the destruction, and not the exaltation of it. For, on that supposition, it must necessarily lose all its own essential properties, and consequently its being. Nor doth he seem to pray only for the manifestation of his divine nature, which was eclipsed in his exinanition or appearance in the form of a servant. There was no need to express this by—the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was." For he had it not, in any especial manner, before the world was; but equally from eternity, and in every moment of time. Wherefore, he had a peculiar glory of his own, with the Father, before the world was. And this was no other but that especial exaltation which he had when he was "set up from everlasting," as the foundation of the counsels of God, for the salvation of the church. In those eternal transactions that were between the Father and the Son, with respect unto his incarnation and mediation—or his undertaking to execute and fulfil the eternal counsels of the wisdom and grace of the Father—there was an especial glory which the Son had with him—the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was." For the manifestation hereof he now prays, and that the glory of his goodness, grace, and love—in his peculiar undertak-

ing of the execution of the counsels of God—might be made to appear. And this is the principal design of the Gospel. It is the declaration, as of the grace of God the Father, so of the love, grace, goodness, and compassion of the Son, in undertaking from everlasting the accomplishment of God's counsels, in the salvation of the church. And hereby doth he hold up the pillars of the earth, or support this inferior creation, which otherwise, with the inhabitants of it, would by sin have been dissolved. And those by whom the eternal, divine pre-existence, in the form of God—antecedent unto his incarnation—is denied, do what lies in them expressly to despoil him of all that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. So we have herein the whole of our design. "In the beginning of God's ways, before his works of old"—that is, in his eternal counsels with respect unto the children of men, or the sanctification and salvation of the church—the Lord possessed, enjoyed the Son, as his eternal wisdom—in and with whom they were laid, in and by whom they were to be accomplished, wherein his delights were with the sons of men.

2. That there was an ineffable delight between the Father and the Son in this his setting up or exaltation. "I was," saith he, "daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." It is not absolutely the mutual, eternal delight of the Father and the Son—arising from the perfection of the same divine excellencies in each person—that is intended. But respect is plainly had unto the counsels of God concerning the salvation of mankind by him who is his power and wisdom unto that end. This counsel of peace was originally between Jehovah and the Branch, (Zech. vi. 13,) or the Father and the Son—as he was to be incarnate. For therein was he "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world;" (1 Pet. i. 20;) viz., to be a Saviour and a deliverer, by whom all the counsels of God were to be accomplished; and this by his own will, and concurrence in counsel with the Father. And such a foundation was laid of the salvation of the church in these counsels of God—as transacted between the Father and the Son—that it is said, that "eternal life was promised before the world began:" Tit. i. 2. For, although the first formal promise was given after the fall, yet was there such a preparation of grace and eternal life in these counsels of God, with his unchangeable purpose to communicate them unto us, that all the faithfulness of God was engaged in them. "God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." There was eternal life with the Father—that is, in his counsel treasured up in Christ, and in him afterwards manifested unto us: 1 John i. 2. And, to show the stability of this purpose and counsel of God, with the infallible consequence of his actual promise, and efficacious accomplishment thereof, "grace" is

said to be "given us in Christ Jesus before the world began:" 2 Tim. i. 9.

In these counsels did God delight—or in the person of Christ, as his eternal wisdom in their contrivance, and as the means of their accomplishment in his future incarnation. Hence he so testifieth of him: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;" (Isa. xlii. 1;) as he also proclaims the same delight in him, from heaven, in the days of his flesh: Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5. He was the delight of God, as he in whom all his counsels for his own glory, in the redemption and salvation of the church, were laid and founded: "My servant, in whom I will be glorified;" (Isa. xlix. 3;) that is, "by raising the tribes of Jacob, restoring the preserved of Israel, in being a light unto the Gentiles, and the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth:" verse 6.

We conceive not aright of the counsels of God, when we think of nothing but the effect of them, and the glory that ariseth from their accomplishment. It is certainly true that they shall all issue in his glory, and the demonstration of it shall fill up eternity. The manifestative glory of God unto eternity, consists in the effects and accomplishment of his holy counsels. Heaven is the state of the actual accomplishment of all the counsels of God, in the sanctification and salvation of the church. But it is not with God as it is with men. Let men's counsels be ever so wise, it must needs abate of their satisfaction in them, because their conjectures (and more they have not) of their effects and events are altogether uncertain. But all the counsels of God having their entire accomplishment through revolutions perplexing and surpassing all created understandings, enclosed in them infallibly and immutably, the great satisfaction, complacency, and delight of the Divine Being is in these counsels themselves.

God doth delight in the actual accomplishment of his works. He made not this world, nor any thing in it, for its own sake. Much less did he make this earth to be a theatre for men to act their lusts upon—the use which it is now put to, and groans under. But he made "all things for himself," Prov. xvi. 4; he "made them for his pleasure," Rev. iv. 11; that is, not only by an act of sovereignty, but to his own delight and satisfaction. And a double testimony did he give hereunto, with respect unto the works of creation. (1.) In the approbation which he gave of the whole upon its survey: and "God saw all that he had made, and, behold, it was very good:" Gen. i. 31. There was that impression of his divine wisdom, power, and goodness upon the whole, as manifested his glory; wherein he was well pleased. For immediately thereon, all creatures capable of the conception and apprehension of his glory, "sang forth his praise:"

Job xxxviii. 6, 7. (2.) In that he rested from his works, or in them, when they were finished: Gen. ii. 2. It was not a rest of weariness from the labour of his work—but a rest of complacency and delight in what he had wrought—that God entered into.

But the principal delight and complacency of God, is in his eternal counsels. For all his delight in his works is but in the effects of those divine properties whose primitive and principal exercise is in the counsels themselves, from whence they proceed. Especially is it so as unto these counsels of the Father and the Son, as to the redemption and salvation of the church, wherein they delight, and mutually rejoice in each other on their account. They are all eternal acts of God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and love—a delight and complacency wherein is no small part of the divine blessedness. These things are absolutely inconceivable unto us, and ineffable by us; we cannot find the Almighty out unto perfection. However, certain it is, from the notions we have of the Divine Being and excellencies, and from the revelation he hath made of himself, that there is an infinite delight in God—in the eternal actings of his wisdom, goodness, and love—wherein, according to our weak and dark apprehensions of things, we may safely place no small portion of divine blessedness. Self-existence in its own immense being—thence self-sufficiency unto itself in all things—and thereon self-satisfaction—is the principal notion we have of divine blessedness.

1. God delighteth in these his eternal counsels in Christ, as they are acts of infinite wisdom, as they are the highest instance wherein it will exert itself. Hence, in the accomplishment of them, Christ is emphatically said to be the "Wisdom of God;" (1 Cor. i. 24;) he in whom the counsels of his wisdom were to be fulfilled. And in him is the manifold wisdom of God made known: Eph. iii. 10. Infinite wisdom being that property of the divine nature whereby all the actings of it are disposed and regulated, suitably unto his own glory, in all his divine excellencies—he cannot but delight in all the acts of it. Even amongst men—whose wisdom compared with that of God is folly itself—yet is there nothing wherein they have a real rational complacency, suitable unto the principles of their nature, but in such actings of that wisdom which they have (and such as it is) towards the proper ends of their being and duty. How much more doth God delight himself in the infinite perfection of his own wisdom, and its eternal acting for the representation of all the glorious excellencies of his nature! Such are his counsels concerning the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ; and because they were all laid in him and with him, therefore is he said to be his "delight continually before the world was." This is that which is proposed as the object of our admiration, Rom. xi. 33–36.

2. They are acts of infinite goodness, whereon the divine nature cannot but be infinitely delighted in them. As wisdom is the directive principle of all divine operations, so goodness is the communicative principle that is effectual in them. He is good, and he doth good—yea, he doth good because he is good, and for no other reason—not by the necessity of nature, but by the intervention of a free act of his will. His goodness is absolutely infinite, essentially perfect in itself; which it could not be if it belonged unto it, naturally and necessarily, to act and communicate itself unto any thing without God himself. The divine nature is eternally satisfied in and with its own goodness; but it is that principle which is the immediate fountain of all the communications of good unto others, by a free act of the will of God. So when Moses desired to see his glory, he tells him that "he will cause all his goodness to pass before him, and would be gracious unto whom he would be gracious:" Exod. xxxiii. 19. All divine operations —in the gracious communication of God himself — are from his goodness, by the intervention of a free act of his will. And the greatest exercise and emanation of divine goodness, was in these holy counsels of God for the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ. For whereas in all other effects of his goodness he gives of *his own*, herein he gave *himself*, in taking our nature upon him. And thence, as he expresseth the design of man in his fall, as upbraiding him with folly and ingratitude, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," Gen. iii. 22, we may, with all humble thankfulness, express the means of our recovery, "Behold, God is become like one of us," as the apostle declares it at large, Phil. ii. 6-8. It is the nature of sincere goodness—even in its lowest degree—above all other habits or principles of nature, to give a delight and complacency unto the mind in the exercise of itself, and communication of its effects. A good man doth both delight in doing good, and hath an abundant reward *for* the doing it, *in* the doing of it. And what shall we conceive concerning eternal, absolute, infinite, perfect, immixed goodness, acting itself in the highest instance (in an effect cognate and like unto it) that it can extend unto! So was it in the counsels of God, concerning the incarnation of his Son and the salvation of the church thereby. No heart can conceive, no tongue can express, the least portion of that ineffable delight of the holy, blessed God, in these counsels, wherein he acted and expressed unto the utmost his own essential goodness. Shall a liberal man devise liberal things, because they are suited unto his inclination? shall a good man find a secret refreshment and satisfaction in the exercise of that low, weak, imperfect, mixed goodness, that his nature is inlaid withal?—and

shall not He whose goodness is essential unto him—whose being it is, and in whom it is the immediate principle of communicating himself unto others—be infinitely delighted in the highest exercise of it which divine wisdom did direct?

The effect of these eternal counsels of God in future glory is reserved for them that do believe; and therein will there be the nearest manifestation of the glory of God himself unto them, when he "shall be glorified in his saints," and eternally "admired in all that believe." But the blessed delight and satisfaction of God, was, and is, in those counsels themselves, as they were acts of his infinite wisdom and goodness. Herein was the Lord Christ his "delight continually before the foundation of the world,"—in that *in* him were all these counsels laid, and *through* him were they all to be accomplished. The constitution of his person was the only way whereby divine wisdom and goodness would act and communicate of themselves unto mankind—in which actings are the eternal delight and complacency of the Divine Being.

3. Love and grace have the same influence into the counsels of God, as wisdom and goodness have. And, in the Scripture notion of these things, they superadd unto goodness this consideration—that their object is sinners, and those that are unworthy. God doth universally communicate of his goodness unto all his creatures, though there be an especial exercise of it towards them that believe. But as unto his love and grace, as they are peculiar unto his elect—the church chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—so they respect them primarily in a lost, undone condition by sin. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" Rom. v. 8. "God is love," saith the apostle. His nature is essentially so. And the best conception of the natural internal actings of the holy persons, is love; and all the acts of it are full of delight. This is, as it were, the womb of all the eternal counsels of God, which renders his complacency in them ineffable. Hence doth he so wonderfully express his delight and complacency in the actings of his love towards the church: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing:" Zeph. iii. 17. The reason why, in the salvation of the church, he rejoiceth with joy and joyeth with singing—the highest expression of divine complacency—is because he resteth in his love, and so is pleased in the exercise of its effects.

But we must return to manifest in particular how all these counsels of God were laid in the person of Christ—to which end the things ensuing may be distinctly considered.

1. God made all things, in the beginning, good, exceeding good. The whole of his work was disposed into a perfect harmony, beauty, and order, suited unto that manifestation of his own glory which he designed therein. And as all things had their own individual existence, and operations suited unto their being, and capable of an end, a rest, or a blessedness, congruous unto their natures and operations—so, in the various respects which they had each to other, in their mutual supplies, assistances, and co-operation, they all tended unto that ultimate end—his eternal glory. For as, in their beings and existence, they were effects of infinite power—so were their mutual respects and ends disposed in infinite wisdom. Thereon were the eternal power and wisdom of God glorified in them; the one in their production, the other in their disposal into their order and harmony. Man was a creature that God made, that by him he might receive the glory that he aimed at in and by the whole inanimate creation—both that below, which was for his use, and that above, which was for his contemplation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Thereunto are we again restored in Christ: James i. 18; Ps. civ. 24, cxxxvi. 5; Rom. i. 20.

2. God was pleased to permit the entrance of sin, both in heaven above and in earth beneath, whereby this whole order and harmony was disturbed. There are yet characters of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, remaining on the works of creation, and inseparable from their beings. But the primitive glory that was to redound unto God by them—especially as unto all things here below—was from the obedience of man, unto whom they were put in subjection. *Their* good estate depended on their subordination unto him in a way of natural use, as *his* did on God in the way of moral obedience: Gen. i. 26, 28; Ps. viii. 6–8. Man, as was said, is a creature which God made, that by him he might receive the glory that he aimed at in and by the whole inanimate creation. This was the end of our nature in its original constitution. Thereunto are we again restored in Christ: James i. 18. But the entrance of sin cast all this order into confusion, and brought the curse on all things here below. Hereby were they deprived of that estate wherein they were declared exceeding good, and cast into that of vanity—under the burden whereof they groan, and will do so to the end: Gen. iii. 17, 18; Rom. viii. 20, 21. And these things we must again consider afterward.

3. Divine wisdom was no way surprised with this disaster. God had, from all eternity, laid in provisions of counsels for the recovery of all things into a better and more permanent estate than what was lost by sin. This is the ἀνάψυξις, the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων, the revivification, the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 19, 21; the

ἀνακεφαλαίωσις, or the gathering all things in heaven and earth into a new head in Christ Jesus: Eph. i. 10. For although, it may be, there is more of curiosity than of edification in a scrupulous inquiry into the method or order of God's eternal decrees or counsels, and the disposal of them into a subserviency one unto another; yet *this* is necessary from the infinite wisdom, prescience, and immutability of God—that he is surprised with nothing, that he is put unto no new counsels, by any events in the works of creation. All things were disposed by him into those ways and methods—and that from eternity—which conduce unto, and certainly issue in, that glory which is ultimately intended. For as we are careful to state the eternal decrees of God, and the actual operations of his providence, so as that the liberty of the will of man, as the next cause of all his moral actions, be not infringed thereby—so ought we to be careful not to ascribe such a sacrilegious liberty unto the wills of any creatures, as that God should be surprised, imposed on, or changed by any of their actings whatever. For "known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world," and with him there is neither "variableness nor shadow of turning."

4. There were, therefore, eternal counsels of God, whereby he disposed all things into a new order, unto his own glory, in the sanctification and salvation of the church. And of them two things may be considered: (1.) Their original; (2.) The design of their accomplishment.

(1.) Their first spring or original was in the divine will and wisdom alone, without respect unto any external moving cause. No reason can be given, no cause be assigned, of these counsels, but the will of God alone. Hence are they called or described, by—the "good pleasure which he purposed in himself;" (Eph. i. 9;) "the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will:" verse 11. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:" Rom. xi. 34–36. The incarnation of Christ, and his mediation thereon, were not the procuring *cause* of these eternal counsels of God, but the *effects* of them, as the Scripture constantly declares. But, (2.) The design of their accomplishment was laid in the person of the Son alone. As he was the essential wisdom of God, all things were at first created by him. But upon a prospect of the ruin of all by sin, God would in and by him —as he was fore-ordained to be incarnate—restore all things. The whole counsel of God unto this end centred in him alone. Hence their foundation is rightly said to be laid in him, and is declared so to be by the apostle: Eph. i. 4. For the spring of the sanctification

and salvation of the church lies in election, the decree whereof compriseth the counsels of God concerning them. Herein, God from the beginning "chooseth us unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit;" (2 Thess. ii. 13;) the one being the end he designeth, the other the means and way thereof. But this he did in Christ; "he chooseth us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;" that is, "unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit." In him we were not actually, nor by faith, before the foundation of the world; yet were we then chosen in him, as the only foundation of the execution of all the counsels of God concerning our sanctification and salvation.

Thus as all things were originally made and created by him, as he was the *essential* wisdom of God—so all things are renewed and recovered by him, as he is the *provisional* wisdom of God, in and by his incarnation. Therefore are these things put together and compared unto his glory. He "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; . . . . all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence:" Col. i. 15–18.

Two things, as the foundation of what is ascribed unto the Lord Christ in the ensuing discourse, are asserted: verse 15.—(1.) That he is "the image of the invisible God." (2.) That he is "the first-born of every creature;" things seeming very distant in themselves, but gloriously united and centring in his person.

(1.) He is "the image of the invisible God;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, he is "in the form of God"—his essential form, for other form there is none in the divine nature—the "brightness of the glory, and the express image of the Father's person." And he is called here the "invisible God," not absolutely with respect unto his essence, though it be most true—the divine essence being absolutely invisible, and that equally, whether considered as in the Father or in the Son—but he is called so with respect unto his counsels, his will, his love, and his grace. For so none hath seen him at any time; but the only-begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, he declares him: John i. 18. As he is thus the essential, the eternal image of the invisible God, his wisdom and power—the efficiency of the first creation, and its consistence being created, is ascribed unto him: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible:" Col. i. 17. And because of the great notions and apprehensions that were then in the world—especially among the Jews, unto whom the apostle had respect in

this epistle—of the greatness and glory of the invisible part of the creation in heaven above, he mentions them in particular, under the most glorious titles that any could, or then did, ascribe unto them—"Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him;"—the same expression that is used of God absolutely: Rom. xi. 36; Rev. iv. 11. Add hereunto those other places to this purpose, John i. 1–3; Heb. i. 1–3; and those that are not under the efficacy of spiritual infatuations, cannot but admire at the power of unbelief, the blindness of the minds of men, and the craft of Satan, in them who deny the divine nature of Jesus Christ. For whereas the apostle plainly affirms, that the works of the creation do demonstrate the eternal power and Godhead of him by whom they were created; (Rom. i. 19, 20;) and not only so, but it is uncontrollably evident in the light of nature: it being so directly, expressly, frequently affirmed, that all things whatever, absolutely, and in their distributions into heaven and earth, with the things contained respectively in them, were made and created by Christ—it is the highest rebellion against the light and teachings of God, to disbelieve his divine existence and power.

(2.) Again it is added, that he is "the first-born of every creature;" which principally respects the new creation, as it is declared: (verse 18:) "He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." For in him were all the counsels of God laid for the recovery of all things unto himself—as he was to be incarnate. And the accomplishment of these counsels of God by him the apostle declares at large in the ensuing verses. And these things are both conjoined and composed in this place. As God the Father did nothing in the first creation but by him—as his eternal wisdom; (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2; Prov. viii.;) so he designed nothing in the new creation, or restoration of all things unto his glory, but in him —as he was to be incarnate. Wherefore in his person were laid all the foundation of the counsels of God for the sanctification and salvation of the church. Herein he is glorified, and that in a way unspeakably exceeding all that glory which would have accrued unto him from the first creation, had all things abode in their primitive constitution.

His person, therefore, is the foundation of the church—the great mystery of godliness, or the religion we profess—the entire life and soul of all spiritual truth—in that all the counsels of the wisdom, grace, and goodness of God, for the redemption, vocation, sanctification, and salvation of the church, were all laid in him, and by him were all to be accomplished.

CHAPTER V.

The Person of Christ the great Representative of God and his Will.

What may be known of God, is,—his nature and existence, with the holy counsels of his will. A representation of them unto us is the foundation of all religion, and the means of our conformity unto him—wherein our present duty and future blessedness do consist. For to know God, so as thereby to be made like unto him, is the chief end of man. This is done perfectly only in the person of Christ, all other means of it being subordinate thereunto, and none of them of the same nature therewithal. The end of the Word itself, is to instruct us in the knowledge of God in Christ. That, therefore, which I shall now demonstrate, is, that in the person and mediation of Christ (which are inseparable, in all the respects of faith unto him) there is made unto us a blessed representation of the glorious properties of the divine nature, and of the holy counsels of the will of God. The first of these I shall speak unto in this chapter—the other, in that which ensues; wherein we shall manifest how all divine truths do centre in the person of Christ. And the consideration of sundry things is necessary unto the explication hereof.

1. God, in his own essence, being, and existence, is absolutely incomprehensible. His nature being immense, and all his holy properties essentially infinite, no creature can directly or perfectly comprehend them, or any of them. He must be infinite that can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite; wherefore God is perfectly known unto himself only—but as for us, how little a portion is heard of him! Hence he is called "The invisible God," and said to dwell in "light inaccessible." The subsistence of his most single and simple nature in three distinct persons, though it raises and ennobles faith in its revelation, yet it amazeth reason which would trust to itself in the contemplation of it—whence men grow giddy who will own no other guide, and are carried out of the way of truth. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:" John i. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 16.

2. Therefore, we can have no direct intuitive notions or apprehensions of the divine essence, or its properties. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. Whatever is pleaded for an intellectual vision of the essence of God in the light of glory, yet none pretend unto a possibility of an immediate, full comprehension of it. But, in our

present state, God is unto us, as he was unto Moses under all the external manifestations of his glory, "in thick darkness:" Exod. xx. 21. All the rational conceptions of the minds of men are swallowed up and lost, when they would exercise themselves directly on that which is absolutely immense, eternal, infinite. When we say it is so, we know not what we say, but only that it is not otherwise. What we *deny* of God, we know in some measure—but what we *affirm* we know not; only we declare what we *believe* and adore. "Neque sensus est ejus, neque phantasia, neque opinio, nec ratio, nec scientia," says Dionys. De Divin. Nomine, 1. We have no means—no corporeal, no intellectual instrument or power—for the comprehension of him; nor hath any other creature: Ἐπεὶ αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστιν ὁ Θεὸς, οὐ μόνον προφῆται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἄγγελοι εἶδον, οὔτε ἀρχάγγελοι· ἀλλ' ἐὰν ἐρωτήσῃς αὐτοὺς, ἀκούσῃ περὶ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας οὐδὲν ἀποκρινομένους· δόξα δὲ ἐν ὑψίστοις μόνον ἅδοντας τῷ Θεῷ· κἂν παρὰ τῶν Χερουβὶμ ἢ τῶν Σεραφὶμ ἐπιθυμήσῃς τι μαθεῖν, τὸ μυστικὸν τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ μέλος ἀκούσῃ, καὶ ὅτι πλήρης ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.—"For that which is God" (the essence of God) "not only have not the prophets seen, but neither the angels nor the archangels. If thou wilt inquire of them, thou shalt hear nothing of the substance of God, but only hear them say, 'Glory to God in the highest.' If thou askest the cherubim and seraphim, thou shalt only hear the praise of holiness, 'The whole earth is full of his glory,'" says Chrysostom, on John i. 18. That God is in himself absolutely incomprehensible unto us, is a necessary effect of our infinite distance from him. But as he externally represents himself unto us, and by the notions which are ingenerated in us by the effects of his properties, are our conceptions of him: Ps. xix. 1; Rom. i. 20. This is declared in the answer given unto that request of Moses: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory:" Exod. xxxiii. 18. Moses had heard a voice speaking unto him, but he that spake was "in thick darkness"—he saw him not. Glorious evidences he gave of his majestatical presence, but no appearance was made of his essence or person. Hereon Moses desireth, for the full satisfaction of his soul, (as the nearer any one is unto God the more earnest will be his desire after the full fruition of him,) that he might have a sight of his glory—not of that created glory in the tokens of his presence and power which he had beheld, but of the uncreated glory of his essence and being. Through a transport of love to God, he would have been in heaven whilst he was on the earth; yea, desired more than heaven itself will afford, if he would have seen the essence of God with his corporeal eyes. In answer hereunto God tells him, that he cannot see his face and live; none can have either bodily sight or direct mental intuition of the Divine Being. But this I will do, saith God, "I will make

my glory pass before thee, and thou shalt see my back parts:" Exod. xxxiii. 18–23, &c. This is all that God would grant, viz., such external representations of himself, in the proclamation of his name, and created appearances of his glory, as we have of a man whose back parts only we behold as he passeth by us. But as to the being of God, and his subsistence in the Trinity of persons, we have no direct intuition into them, much less comprehension of them.

3. It is evident, therefore, that our conceptions of God, and of the glorious properties of his nature, are both ingenerated in us and regulated, under the conduct of divine revelation, by reflections of his glory on other things, and representations of his divine excellencies in the effects of them. So the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being manifested and understood by the things that are made: Rom. i. 20. Yet must it be granted, that no mere creature, not the angels above, not the heaven of heavens, are meet or able to receive upon them such characters of the divine excellencies, as to be a complete, satisfactory representation of the being and properties of God unto us. They are all finite and limited, and so cannot properly represent that which is infinite and immense. And this is the true reason why all worship or religious adoration of them is idolatry. Yet are there such effects of God's glory in them, such impressions of divine excellencies upon them, as we cannot comprehend nor search out unto perfection. How little do we conceive of the nature, glory, and power of angels! So remote are we from an immediate comprehension of the uncreated glory of God, as that we cannot fully apprehend, nor conceive aright, the reflection of it on creatures in themselves finite and limited. Hence, they thought of old, when they had seen an angel, that so much of the divine perfections had been manifested unto them that thereon they must die: Judges xiii. 21, 22. Howbeit, they [the angels] come infinitely short of making any complete representation of God; nor is it otherwise with any creature whatever.

4. Mankind seem to have always had a common apprehension that there was need of a nearer and more full representation of God unto them, than was made in any of the works of creation or providence. The heavens, indeed, declared his glory, and the firmament always showed his handy-work—the invisible things of his eternal power and Godhead were continually made known by the things that are made; but men generally miscarried and missed it in the contemplation of them, as the apostle declares, Rom. i. For still they were influenced by a common presumption, that there must be a nearer and more evident manifestation of God—that made by the works of creation and providence being not sufficient to guide

them unto him. But in the pursuit hereof they utterly ruined themselves; they would do what God had not done. By common consent they framed representations of God unto themselves; and were so besotted therein, that they utterly lost the benefit which they might have received by the manifestation of him in the works of the creation, and took up with most foolish imaginations. For whereas they might have learned from thence the being of God, his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness—viz., in the impressions and characters of them on the things that were made—in their own representations of him, they "changed the glory of the invisible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things:" Rom. i. 23. Wherefore this common presumption—that there was no way to attain a due sense of the Divine Being but by some representation of it—though true in itself, yet, by the craft of Satan, and foolish superstitions of the minds of men, became the occasion of all idolatry and flagitious wickedness in the world. Hence were all those ἐπιφάνειαι, or supposed "illustrious appearances" of their gods, which Satan deluded the Gentiles by; and hence were all the ways which they devised to bring God into human nature, or the likeness of it. Wherefore, in all the revelations that ever God made of himself, his mind and will, he always laid this practice of making representations of him under the most severe interdict and prohibition. And this he did evidently for these two reasons:—

(1.) Because it was a bold and foolish intrenching upon his provisional wisdom in the case. He had taken care that there should be a glorious image and representation of himself, infinitely above what any created wisdom could find out. But as, when Moses went into the mount, the Israelites would not wait for his return, but made a calf in his stead; so mankind—refusing to wait for the actual exhibition of that glorious image of himself which God had provided—broke in upon his wisdom and sovereignty, to make some of their own. For this cause was God so provoked, that he gave them up to such stupid blindness, that in those things wherein they thought to show themselves wise, and to bring God nearer unto them, they became contemptibly foolish—abased their nature, and all the noble faculties of their minds unto hell, and departed unto the utmost distance from God, whom they sought to bring near unto them.

(2.) Because nothing that can fall into the invention or imagination of men could make any other but false representations of him, and so substitute an idol in his place. His own immediate works have great characters of his divine excellencies upon them, though unto us obscure and not clearly legible without the light of revelation. Somewhat he did, of old, represent of his glorious presence—

though not of his being—in the visible institutions of his worship. But all men's inventions to this end, which are neither divine works of nature, nor divine institutions of worship, are all but false representations of God, and therefore accursed by him.

Wherefore it is granted, that God hath placed many characters of his divine excellencies upon his works of creation and providence—many [characters] of his glorious presence upon the tabernacle and temple of old—but none of these things ever did or could give such a representation of him as wherein the souls of men might fully acquiesce, or obtain such conceptions of him as might enable them to worship and honour him in a due manner. They cannot, I say—by all that may be seen in them, and learned from them—represent God as the complete object of all our affections, of all the actings of our souls in faith, trust, love, fear, obedience, in that way whereby he may be glorified, and we may be brought unto the everlasting fruition of him. This, therefore, is yet to be inquired after. Wherefore—

5. A mere external doctrinal revelation of the divine nature and properties, without any exemplification or real representation of them, was not sufficient unto the end of God in the manifestation of himself. This is done in the Scripture. But the whole Scripture is built on this foundation, or proceeds on this supposition—that there is a real representation of the divine nature unto us, which it declares and describes. And as there was such a notion on the minds of all men, that some representation of God, wherein he might be near unto them, was necessary—which arose from the consideration of the infinite distance between the divine nature and their own, which allowed of no measures between them—so, as unto the event, God himself hath declared that, in his own way, such a representation was needful—unto that end of the manifestation of himself which he designed. For—

6. All this is done in the person of Christ. He is the complete image and perfect representation of the Divine Being and excellencies. I do not speak of it absolutely, but as God proposeth himself as the object of our faith, trust, and obedience. Hence it is God, as the Father, who is so peculiarly represented in him and by him; as he says: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" John xiv. 9.

Unto such a representation two things are required:—(1.) That all the properties of the divine nature—the knowledge whereof is necessary unto our present obedience and future blessedness—be expressed in it, and manifested unto us. (2.) That there be, therein, the nearest approach of the divine nature made unto us, whereof *it* is capable, and which *we* can receive. And both these are found in the person of Christ, and therein alone.

In the person of Christ we consider both the constitution of it in the union of his natures, and the respect of it unto his work of mediation, which was the end of that constitution. And—

(1.) Therein, as so considered, is there a blessed representation made unto us of all the holy properties of the nature of God—of his wisdom, his power, his goodness, grace, and love, his righteousness, truth, and holiness, his mercy and patience. As this is affirmed concerning them all in general, or the glory of God in them, which is seen and known only in the face of Christ, so it were easy to manifest the same concerning every one of them in particular, by express testimonies of Scripture. But I shall at present confine myself unto the proofs of the whole assertion which do ensue.

(2.) There is, therein, the most incomprehensible approach of the divine nature made unto ours, such as all the imaginations of men did ever infinitely fall short of—as hath been before declared. In the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself, and our cognation unto God thereby, with the union which believers obtain with him thereon—being one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, (John xvii. 20, 21,)—there is the nearest approach of the Divine Being unto us that the nature of things is capable of. Both these ends were designed in those representations of God which were of human invention; but in both of them they utterly failed. For, instead of representing any of the glorious properties of the nature of God, they debased it, dishonoured it, and filled the minds of men with vile conceptions of it; and instead of bringing God nearer unto them, they put themselves at an infinite moral distance from him. But my design is the confirmation of our assertions from the Scripture.

"He is the image of the invisible God:" Col. i. 15. This title or property of "invisible," the apostle here gives unto God, to show what need there was of an image or representation of him unto us, as well as of one in whom he would declare the counsels of his will. For he intends not only the absolute invisibility of his essence, but his being unknown unto us in himself. Wherefore, (as was before observed,) mankind was generally prone to make visible representations of this invisible God, that, in them, they might contemplate on him and have him present with them, as they foolishly imagined. Unto the craft of Satan abusing this inclination of mankind, idolatry owes its original and progress in the world: howbeit, necessary it was that this invisible God should be so represented unto us by some image of him, as that we might know him, and that therein he might be worshipped according unto his own mind and will. But this must be of his own contrivance—an effect of his own infinite wisdom. Hence, as he absolutely rejecteth all images and represen-

tations of him of men's devisings, (for the reasons before mentioned,) and declares that the honour that any should think would thereby redound unto him was not given unto him, but unto the devil; so that which he hath provided himself, unto his own holy ends and purposes, is every way approved of him. For he will have "all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and so as that "he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father:" John v. 23.

This image, therefore, is the person of Christ; "he is the image of the invisible God." This, in the first place, respects the divine person absolutely, as he is the essential image of the Father: which must briefly be declared.

1. The Son is sometimes said to be ἐν Πατρὶ, "in the Father," and the Father in the Son: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" John xiv. 10. This is from the unity or sameness of their nature—for he and the Father are one: John x. 30. Thence all things that the Father hath are his, (chap. xvi. 15,) because their nature is one and the same. With respect unto the divine essence absolutely considered, wherein the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, the one cannot be said to be the image of the other. For he and the Father are one; and one and the same thing cannot be the image of itself, in that wherein it is one.

2. The Son is said not only to be ἐν Πατρὶ, "in the Father," in the unity of the same essence; but also πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα or Θεὸν, "with the Father," or "with God," in the distinction of his person: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God:" John i. 1. "The Word was God," in the unity of the divine essence—and "the Word was with God," in its distinct personal subsistence. "The Word"—that is, the person of the Son, as distinct from the Father—"was with God," or the Father. And in this respect he is the essential image of the Father, as he is called in this place, and Heb. i. 3; and that because he partakes of all the same divine properties with the Father.

But although the Father, on the other side, be partaker of all the essential divine properties of the Son, yet is not he said to be the image of the Son. For this property of an image respects not the things themselves, but the manner of the participation of them. Now the Son receives all from the Father, and the Father nothing from the Son. Whatever belongs unto the person of the Son, as the person of the Son, he receives it all from the Father by eternal generation: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given unto the Son to have life in himself:" John v. 26. He is therefore the essential image of the Father, because all the properties of the

divine nature are communicated unto him together with personality —from the Father.

3. In his incarnation, the Son was made the representative image of God unto us—as he was, in his person, the essential image of the Father, by eternal generation. The invisible God—whose nature and divine excellencies our understandings can make no approach unto—doth in him represent, exhibit, or make present unto our faith and spiritual sense, both himself and all the glorious excellencies of his nature.

Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may be considered three ways.

1. Merely with respect unto his divine nature. This is one and the same with that of the Father. In this respect the one is not the image of the other, for both are the same.

2. With respect unto his divine person as the Son of the Father, the only-begotten, the eternal Son of God. Thus he receives, *as* his personality, *so* all divine excellencies, from the Father; so he is the essential image of the Father's person.

3. As he took our nature upon him, or in the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself, in order unto the work of his mediation. So is he the only representative image of God unto us—in whom alone we see, know, and learn all the divine excellencies—so as to live unto God, and be directed unto the enjoyment of him. All this himself instructs us in.

He reflects it on the Pharisees, as an effect of their blindness and ignorance, that they had neither heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen his shape: John v. 37. And in opposition hereunto he tells his disciples, that they had known the Father, and seen him: chap. xiv. 7. And the reason he gives thereof is, because they that knew him, knew the Father also. And when one of his disciples, not yet sufficiently instructed in this mystery, replied, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," (verse 8,) his answer is, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" verse 9.

Three things are required unto the justification of this assertion.

1. That the Father and he be of the same nature, have the same essence and being. For otherwise it would not follow that he who had seen him had seen the Father also. This ground of it he declares in the next verse: "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father"—namely, because they were one in nature and essence For the divine nature being simply the same in them all, the divine persons are in each other, by virtue of the oneness of that nature.

2. That he be distinct from him. For otherwise there cannot be a seeing of the Father by the seeing of him. He is seen in the Son

as represented by him—as his image—the Word—the Son of the Father, as he was with God. The unity of nature and the distinction of persons is the ground of that assertion of our Saviour: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also."

3. But, moreover, the Lord Christ hath a respect herein unto himself, in his entire person as he was incarnate, and therein unto the discharge of his mediatory work. "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me?" Whilst he was with them, dwelt among them, conversed with them, he was the great representative of the glory of God unto them. And, notwithstanding this particular mistake, they did then see his glory, "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father:" John i. 14. And in him was manifested the glory of the Father. He "is the image of the invisible God." In him God was, in him he dwelt, in him is he known, in him is he worshipped according unto his own will, in him is there a nearer approach made unto us by the divine nature than ever could enter into the heart of man to conceive. In the constitution of his person—of two natures, so infinitely distinct and separate in themselves—and in the work it was designed unto, the wisdom, power, goodness, love, grace, mercy, holiness, and faithfulness of God, are manifested unto us. This is the one blessed "image of the invisible God," wherein we may learn, wherein we may contemplate and adore, all his divine perfections.

The same truth is testified unto, Heb. i. 3. God spake unto us in the Son, who is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." His divine nature is here included, as that without which he could not have made a perfect representation of God unto us. For the apostle speaks of him, as of him "by whom the worlds were made," and who "upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Yet doth he not speak of him absolutely as he was God, but also as he who "in himself purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;" that is, in his whole person. Herein he is ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, the effulgency, the resplendency of divine glory, that wherein the divine glory shines forth in an evident manifestation of itself unto us. And as a farther explication of the same mystery, it is added, that he is the character or "express image" of the person of the Father. Such an impression of all the glorious properties of God is on him, as that thereby they become legible unto all them that believe.

So the same apostle affirms again that he is the "image of God," 2 Cor. iv. 4; in what sense, and unto what end, he declares, verse 6: "We have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Still it is supposed that the glory of God, as essentially in him, is invisible unto us, and incomprehensible by us. Yet

is there a knowledge of it necessary unto us, that we may live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him. This we obtain only in the face or person of Christ—ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; for in him that glory is represented unto us.

This was the testimony which the apostles gave concerning him, when he dwelt among them in the days of his flesh. They saw "his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:" John i. 14. The divine glory was manifest in him, and in him they saw the glory of the Father. So the same apostle witnesseth again, who recorded this testimony: "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:" 1 John i. 2. In the Son incarnate, that eternal life which was originally in and with the Father was manifest unto us.

It may be said, that the Scripture itself is sufficient for this end of the declaration of God unto us, so that there is no need of any other representation of him; and [that] these things serve only to turn the minds of men from learning the mind and will of God therein, to seek for all in the person of Christ. But the true end of proposing these things is, to draw men unto the diligent study of the Scripture, wherein alone they are revealed and declared. And in its proper use, and unto its proper end, it is perfect and most sufficient. It is λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ—"the word of God;" howbeit it is not λόγος οὐσιώδης, the internal, essential Word of God—but λόγος προφορικὸς, the external word spoken by him. It is not, therefore, nor can be, the image of God, either essential or representative; but is the revelation and declaration of it unto us, without which we can know nothing of it.

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the express image of the person of the Father; and the principal end of the whole Scripture, especially of the Gospel, is to declare him so to be, and how he is so. What God promised by his prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, that is fully declared in the Gospel: Rom. i. 1–4. The Gospel is the declaration of Christ as "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; or an evident representation of God in his person and mediation unto us: Gal. iii. 1. Wherefore three things are herein to be considered.

1. "Objectum reale et formale fidei"—the real, formal object of our faith in this matter. This is the person of Christ, the Son of God incarnate, the representative image of the glory of God unto us; as in the testimonies insisted on.

2. "Medium revelans," or "lumen deferens"—the means of its revelation, or the objective light whereby the perception and knowledge of it is conveyed unto our minds. This is the Gospel; compared unto a glass because of the prospect which we have of the

image of God therein: 2 Cor. iii. 18. But without it—by any other means, and not by it—we can behold nothing of this image of God.

3. "Lumen præparans, elevans, disponens subjectum"—the internal light of the mind in the saving illumination of the Holy Spirit, enabling us—by that means, and in the use of it—spiritually to behold and discern the glory of God in the face of Christ: 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Through both these, in their several ways of operation, there proceedeth—from the real object of our faith, Christ, as the image of God—a transforming power, whereby the soul is changed into the same image, or is made conformable unto Christ; which is that whereunto we are predestinated. But we may yet a little farther contemplate on these things, in some instances wherein the glory of God and our own duty are concerned.

1. The glory of God's wisdom is exalted, and the pride of the imaginations of men is proportionably debased. And in these two consists the real foundation of all religion in our souls. This God designed in the dispensation of himself and his will, 1 Cor. i. 29, 31; this he calls us unto, Isa. ii. 22; Zech. ii. 13. As this frame of heart is prevalent in us, so do all other graces shine and flourish. And it is that which influences all our duties, so far as they are acceptable unto God. And there is no truth more instructive unto it than that before us. It is taken for granted—and the event hath demonstrated it to be so—that some express representation should be made of God unto us, wherein we might contemplate the glorious excellencies of his nature, and he might draw nigh unto us, and be present with us. This, therefore, men *attempted* to effect and accomplish; and this God alone hath *performed*, and could so do. And their several ways for this end are herein manifest. As the way whereby God hath *done* it is the principal exaltation of his infinite wisdom and goodness, (as shall be immediately more fully declared,) so the way whereby men *attempted* it was the highest instance of wickedness and folly. It is, as we have declared, in *Christ alone* that God hath done it. And that therein he hath exalted and manifested the riches, the treasures of his infinite wisdom and goodness, is that which the Gospel, the Spirit, and the church, do give testimony unto. A more glorious effect of divine wisdom and goodness, a more illustrious manifestation of them, there never was, nor ever shall be, than in the finding out and constitution of this way of the representation of God unto us. The ways of men, for the same end, were so far from giving a right representation of the perfections of the divine nature, that they were all of them below, beneath, and unworthy of our own. For in nothing did the blindness, darkness, and folly of our nature, in its depraved condition, ever so exert and evidence themselves, as in contriving ways for the representation of God unto

us—that is, in idolatry, the worst and vilest of evils: so Ps. cxv. 4–8; Isa. xliv.; Rev. ix. 19, 20, &c. This pride and folly of men was that which lost all knowledge of God in the world, and all obedience unto him. The ten commandments are but a transcript of the light and law of nature. The first of these required that God—the only true God—the Creator and Governor of all—should be acknowledged, worshipped, believed in, and obeyed. And the second was, that we should not make unto ourselves any image or representation of him. Whatever he would do himself, yet he strictly forbade that we should make any such unto ourselves. And here began the apostasy of the world from God. They did not absolutely reject him, and so cast off the *first* fundamental precept of the law of nature—but they submitted not unto his wisdom and authority in the *next*, which was evidently educed from it. They would make images and representations of him unto themselves; and by this invention of their own, they first dishonoured him, and then forsook him, giving themselves up unto the rule and service of the devil. Wherefore, as the way that God in infinite wisdom found out for the representation of himself unto us, was the only means of recovery from the first apostasy —the way found out by men, unto the same end, was the great means of casting the generality of mankind unto the farthest degree of a new apostasy from God whereof our nature is capable. And of the same kind will all our contrivances be found to be—in what belongs unto his worship and glory—though, unto us, they may appear both specious and necessary. This, therefore, should lead us into a continual admiration of the wisdom and grace of God, with a due sense of our own vileness and baseness by nature. For we are in nothing better or wiser than they who fell into the utmost folly and wickedness, in their designs for the highest end, or the representation of God unto us. The more we dwell on such considerations, the more fear and reverence of God, with faith, trust, and delight in him, will be increased —as also humility in ourselves, with a sense of divine grace and love.

2. There is a peculiar ground of the spiritual efficacy of this representation of God. The revelations that he hath made of himself, and of the glorious properties of his nature, in the works of creation and providence, are, in themselves, clear, plain, and manifest: Ps. xix. 1, 2; Rom. i. 19, 20. Those which are made in Christ are sublime and mysterious. Howbeit, the knowledge we have of him as he is represented unto us in Christ is far more clear, certain, steady, effectual, and operative, than any we can attain in and by all other ways of revelation. The reason hereof is, not only because there is a more full and extensive revelation made of God, his counsels and his will, in Christ and the Gospel, than in all the works of creation and providence; but because this revelation and representation of God is re-

ceived by *faith* alone, the other by *reason* only: and it is faith that is the principle of spiritual light and life in us. What is received thereby is operative and effectual, unto all the ends of the life of God. For we live by faith here, as we shall by sight hereafter. Reason alone—especially as it is corrupted and depraved—can discern no glory in the representation of God by Christ; yea, all that is spoken thereof, or declared in the Gospel, is foolishness unto it. Hence many live in a profession of the faith of the letter of the Gospel, yet—having no light, guide, nor conduct, but that of reason—they do not, they cannot, really behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; nor hath the revelation of it any efficacy upon their souls. The manifestation of him in the light of nature, by the works of creation and providence, is suited unto their reason, and doth affect it: for that [manifestation] which is made in Christ, they say of it, as the Israelites did of manna, that came down from heaven, "What is it?" we know not the meaning of it. For it is made unto faith alone, and all men have not faith. And where God shines into the heart, by that faith which is of divine operation—there, with " open face, we behold the glory of God, as in a glass;" or have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. There is not the meanest believer, but—in the real exercise of faith in Christ—hath more glorious apprehensions of God, his wisdom, goodness, and grace, of all his glorious excellencies, than the most learned and wise in the world can attain unto, in the exercise of reason on the proper objects of it. So are these things opposed by the apostle, 1 Cor. i. Wherefore, faith in Christ is the only means of the true knowledge of God; and the discoveries which are made of him and his excellencies thereby are those alone which are effectual to conform us unto his image and likeness. And this is the reason why some men are so little affected with the Gospel—notwithstanding the continual preaching of it unto them, and their outward profession of it. It doth not inwardly affect them, it produceth no blessed effects in them. Some sense they have of the power of God in the works of creation and providence, in his rule and government, and in the workings of natural conscience. Beyond these, they have no real sense of him. The reason is, because they have not faith—whereby alone the representation that is made of God in Christ, and declared in the Gospel, is made effectual unto the souls of men. Wherefore—

3. It is the highest degeneracy from the mystery of the Christian religion, for men to satisfy themselves in natural discoveries of the Divine Being and excellencies, without an acquaintance with that perfect declaration and representation of them which is made in the person of Christ, as he is revealed and declared in the Gospel. It is confessed that there may be good use made of the evidence which

reason gives or takes from its own innate principles—with the consideration of the external works of divine wisdom and power—concerning the being and rule of God. But to rest herein—to esteem it the best and most perfective knowledge of God that we can attain—not to rise up unto the more full, perfect, and evident manifestation of himself that he hath made in Christ—is a declaration of our unbelief, and a virtual renunciation of the Gospel. This is the spring of that declension unto a mere natural religion which discovers itself in many, and usually ends in the express denial of the divine person of Christ. For when the proper *use* of it is despised, on what grounds can the *notion* of it be long retained? But a supposition of his divine person is the foundation of this discourse. Were he not the *essential* image of the Father in his *own divine person*, he could not be the *representative* image of God unto us as he is *incarnate*. For if he were a man only—however miraculously produced and gloriously exalted, yet the angels above, the glorious heavens, the seat and throne of God, with other effects of creating power and wisdom, would no less represent his glory than it could be done in him. Yet are they nowhere, jointly nor separately, styled "the image of the invisible God"—"the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" nor doth God shine into our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of *them*. And it argues the woful enmity of the carnal mind against God and all the effects of his wisdom, that, whereas he hath granted us such a glorious image and representation of himself, we like it not, we delight not in the contemplation of it, but either despise it or neglect it, and please ourselves in that which is incomparably beneath it.

4. Because God is not *thus known* it is—that the knowledge of him is so barren and fruitless in the world, as it manifests itself to be. It were easy to produce, yea, endless to number the testimonies that might be produced out of heathen writers, given unto the being and existence of God, his authority, monarchy, and rule; yet what were the effects of that knowledge which they had? Besides that wretched idolatry wherein they were all immersed, as the apostle declares, Rom. i, it rescued them from no kind of wickedness and villany; as he there also manifests. And the virtues which were found among them were evidently derived from other causes, and not from the knowledge they had of God. The Jews have the knowledge of God by the letter of the Old Testament; but yet—not knowing him in Christ, and having lost all sense and apprehension of those representations which were made of his being in him, in the Law—they continue universally a people carnal, obstinate, and wicked. They have neither the virtues of the heathens among them, nor the power of the truth of religion. As it was with them

of old, so it yet continueth to be; "they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate:" Tit. i. 16. So is it among many that are called Christians at this day in the world: great pretence there is unto the knowledge of God—yet did flagitious sins and wickedness scarce ever more abound among the heathens themselves. It is the knowledge of "God in Christ" alone that is effectually powerful to work the souls of men into a conformity unto him. Those alone who behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

CHAPTER VI.

The Person of Christ the great Repository of Sacred Truth—Its Relation thereunto.

Divine supernatural truth is called by the apostle, "The truth which is after godliness:" Tit. i. 1. Whereas, therefore, the person of Christ is the great mystery of godliness, we must, in the next place, inquire—What is the relation of spiritual supernatural truth thereunto? And this I shall do, in pursuit of what was proposed in the foregoing chapter, viz., that he is the great representative unto the church, of God, his holy properties, and the counsels of his will.

All divine truth may be referred unto two heads. First, that which is essentially so; and then that which is so declaratively. The first is God himself, the other is the counsel of his will.

First, God himself is the first and only essential Truth, in whose being and nature the springs of all truth do lie. Whatever is truth —so far as it is so, derives from him, is an emanation from that eternal fountain of it. Being, truth, and goodness, is the principal notion of God; and in him they are all the same. How this is represented in Christ—as *in himself* he is the *essential* image of the Father, and as *incarnate* the *representative* image of him unto us —hath been declared.

Secondly, The counsels of God are the next spring and cause—as also the subject-matter or substance—of all truth that is so declaratively. Divine truth is "the declaration of the counsels of God:" Acts xx. 27. Of them all the person of Christ is the sacred repository and treasury—in him are they to be learned. All their efficacy and use depend on their relation unto him. He is the centre and circumference of all the lines of truth—that is, which is divine, spiritual, and supernatural. And the beauty of it is presented unto us only in *his* face or person. We see it not, we know it not, but

as God shines into our hearts to give us the knowledge of it therein: 2 Cor. iv. 6.

So he testifieth of himself, "I am the truth:" John xiv. 6. He is so *essentially*—as he is one with the Father, the God of truth: Deut. xxxii. 4. He is so *efficiently*—as by him alone it is fully and effectually declared; for "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:" John i. 18. He is so *substantially*—in opposition unto the types and shadows of the Old Testament; for in him dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" Col. ii. 9. "The body is of Christ:" verse 17. He is so *subjectively*—for all divine truth, relating to the saving knowledge of God, is treasured up in him. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:" verse 3. That is, the wisdom and knowledge of God—in his counsels concerning the vocation, sanctification, and salvation, of the church—concerning which the apostle falls into that holy admiration, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Rom. xi. 33. And they are called "treasures" on a twofold account, both mentioned together by the Psalmist. "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord; how great is the sum of them!" They are treasures, because precious and invaluable—and are therefore usually preferred above all earthly treasures which men most highly esteem: Prov. iii. 14, 15. And they are so, because of the greatness of the sum of them; and therefore also called "unsearchable riches:" Eph. iii. 8. These precious, unsearchable treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God—that is, all divine supernatural truths—are hid, or safely deposited, in Christ—in and from whom alone they are to be learned and received.

So we are said to learn *the truth as it is in Jesus:* Eph. iv. 21. And the knowledge of all evangelical sacred truth is, in the Scripture, most frequently expressed by the knowledge of Him: John viii. 19, xvii. 3; 2 Cor. ii. 14, iv. 5, 6; Eph. i. 17; Phil. iii. 8, 10; 1 John i. 1, 2, ii. 4, 13, 14, v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 20.

Setting aside what we have discoursed and proved before—concerning the laying of the foundation of all the counsels of God in the person of Christ, and the representation of them in the ineffable constitution thereof—I shall give some few instances of this relation of all supernatural truths unto him—manifesting that we cannot learn them, nor know them, but with a due respect thereunto.

1. There are two things wherein the *glory of truth* doth consist. (1.) Its light. (2.) Its efficacy or power. And both these do all supernatural truths derive from this relation unto Christ.

(1.) No truth whatever brings any spiritual light unto the mind, but by virtue thereof. "In him is life, and the life is the light of

men:" John i. 4. He is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:" verse 9. Wherefore, as truth is the only means of illumination, so it cannot communicate any light unto the mind, but only as it is a beam from him, as it is an organ to convey it from that fountain. Separated from him and its relation unto him, it will not retain, it cannot communicate, any real spiritual light or understanding to the souls of men. How should it, if all light be originally in him—as the Scripture testifieth? Then alone is the mind irradiated with heavenly truth, when it is received as proceeding from, and leading unto, the Sun of Righteousness—the blessed spring of all spiritual light—which is Christ himself. Whatever notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, yet—if they know them not in their respect unto the person of Christ as the foundation of the counsels of God—if they discern not how they proceed from him, and centre in him—they will bring no spiritual, saving light unto their understanding. For all spiritual life and light is in him, and from him alone. An instance hereof we have in the Jews. They have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, wherein the substance of all divine truth is revealed and expressed; and they are diligent in the study of them; howbeit their minds are not at all illuminated nor irradiated by the truths contained in them, but they live and walk in horrible darkness. And the only reason hereof is, because they know not, because they reject, the *relation* of them unto Christ—without which they are deprived of all enlightening power.

(2.) *Efficacy* or power is the second property of divine truth. And the end of this efficacy is to make us like unto God: Eph. iv. 20–24. The mortification of sin, the renovation of our natures, the sanctification of our minds, hearts, and affections, the consolation of our souls, with their edification in all the parts of the life of God, and the like, are the things that God hath designed to effect by his truth; (John xvii. 17;) whence it is able to "build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified:" Acts xx. 32. But it is from their relation unto the person of Christ that they have any thing of this power and efficacy. For they have it no otherwise but as they are conveyances of his grace unto the souls of men. So 1 John i. 1, 2.

Wherefore, as professors of the truth, if separated from Christ as unto real union, are withering branches—so truths professed, if doctrinally separated from him, or their respect unto him, have no living power or efficacy in the souls of men. When Christ is formed in the heart by them, when he dwelleth plentifully in the soul through their operation, then, and not else, do they put forth their proper power and efficacy. Otherwise, they are as waters separated from

the fountain—they quickly dry up or become a noisome puddle; or as a beam interrupted from its continuity unto the sun—it is immediately deprived of light.

2. All divine spiritual truths are declarative, either of the grace and love of God unto us, or [of] our duty, obedience, and gratitude unto him. But, as unto these things, Christ is all and in all; we can have no due apprehensions of the love and grace of God, no understanding of the divine truths of the Word—wherein they are revealed, and whereby they are exhibited unto them that believe—but in the exercise of faith on Christ himself. For in, by, and from him alone, it is that they are proposed unto us, that we are made partakers of them. It is from his fulness that all grace is received. No truth concerning them can, by any imagination, be separated from him. He is the life and soul of all such truths—without which, they, as they are written in the Word, are but a dead letter, and that of such a character as is illegible unto us, as unto any real discovery of the grace and love of God. And as unto those of the other sort, which are instructive unto us in our duty, obedience, and gratitude—we cannot come unto a practical compliance with any one of them, but by the aids of grace received from him. For without him we can do nothing; (John xv. 5;) and he alone *understands* divine truth who *doeth* it: John vii. 17. There is not, therefore, any one text of Scripture which presseth our duty unto God, that we can so understand as to perform that duty in an acceptable manner, without an actual regard unto Christ, from whom alone we receive ability for the performance of it, and in or through whom alone it is accepted with God.

3. All the *evidence* of divine spiritual truth, and all the foundation of our real interest in the things whereof it is a declaration—as to benefit, advantage, and comfort—depend on their relation unto Christ. We may take an instance in one article of divine truth, which seems to be most disengaged from any such relation, namely, the resurrection of the dead. But there is no man who rightly believes or comprehends this truth, who doth it not upon the evidence given unto it, and example of it, in the person of Christ rising from the dead. Nor can any man have a comfortable expectation or faith of an especial interest in a blessed resurrection, (which is our whole concern in that truth, Phil. iii. 11,) but by virtue of a mystical union unto him, as the head of the church that shall be raised unto glory. Both these the apostle insists upon at large, 1 Cor. xv. So is it with all other truths whatever.

Wherefore, all divine supernatural truths revealed in the Scripture, being nothing but the declaration of these counsels of God, whose foundation was laid in the person of Christ; and whereas they are all

of them expressive of the love, wisdom, goodness, and grace of God unto us, or instructive in our obedience and duty to him—all the actings of God towards us, and all ours towards him, being in and through him alone; and whereas all the life and power of these truths, all their beauty, symmetry, and harmony in their union and conjunction, which is expressive of divine wisdom, is all from him, who, as a living spirit diffused through the whole system, both acts and animates it—all the treasures of truth, wisdom, and knowledge, may be well said to be hid in him. And we may consider some things that ensue hereon.

1. Hence it is, that those who reject the divine person of Christ—who believe it not, who discern not the wisdom, grace, love, and power of God therein—do constantly reject or corrupt all other spiritual truths of divine revelation. Nor can it otherwise be. For they have a consistency only in their relation unto the mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh"—and from thence derive their sense and meaning. This being removed—the truth, in all other articles of religion, immediately falls to the ground. An instance hereof we have in the Socinians. For, although they retain the common notions of the unity and existence of the divine nature, which are indelibly fixed on the minds of men, yet is there no one truth that belongs peculiarly unto the Christian religion, but they either deny it or horribly deprave it. Many things concerning God and his essential properties—as his immutability, immensity, prescience—they have greatly perverted. So is that fulfilled in them which was spoken by Jude the apostle, verse 10. They "speak evil of those things which they know not: and what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." So they do in the things mentioned, whereof there are natural notions in the minds of men; but of evangelical truths—which they know not—they speak evil, and deride them. The holy Trinity they blaspheme—the incarnation of the Son of God they scorn—the work of his mediation in his oblation and intercession, with the satisfaction and merit of his obedience and suffering, they reject. So do they [reject] whatever we are taught of the depravation of our natures by the fall, of the renovation of them by the Holy Ghost; and unto all other articles of our faith do they offer violence, to corrupt them. The beginning of their transgression or apostasy, is in a disbelief of the divine person of Christ. That being rejected, all other sacred truths are removed from their basis and centre, [from] that which gives them their unity and harmony. Hereon they fluctuate up and down in the minds of men, and, appearing unto them under various deceiving colours, are easily misapprehended or disbelieved. Yea, there can no direct, proper representa-

tion be made of them unto the understandings of men. Dissolve the knot, centre, and harmony in the most beautiful composition or structure — and every part will contribute as much unto the deformity and ruin of the whole, as it did before unto its beauty and consistency. So is it with every doctrine—so is it with the whole system of evangelical truths. Take the person of Christ out of them, dissolve their harmony in relation thereunto—whereby we no longer hold the Head in the faith and profession of them—and the minds of men cannot deliver them from an irreconcilable difference among themselves. Hereon some of them are immediately rejected, and some of them corrupted; for they lose their native light and beauty. They will neither agree nor consist any where but in Christ. Hence it is that no instance can be given of any, who, from the original of the Christian religion, rejected the divine person of Christ, and preserved any one evangelical truth besides, pure and uncorrupted. And I do freely confess, that all which we believe concerning the holy Trinity, the eternal counsels of God, the efficacy of the mediation of Christ, his satisfaction and merit, the way which we own of the sanctification, justification, and salvation of the church—are to be esteemed fables, as the Socinians contend, if what we believe concerning the person of Christ be so also.

2. Hence it is that the knowledge and profession of the truth, with many, is so fruitless, inefficacious, and useless. It is not known, it is not understood nor believed—in its relation unto Christ; on which account alone it conveys either light or power to the soul. Men profess they know the truth; but they know it not in its proper order, in its harmony and use. It leads them not to Christ, it brings not Christ unto them; and so is lifeless and useless. Hence, oft-times, none are more estranged from the life of God than such as have much notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Scripture. For they are all of them useless, and subject to be abused, if they are not improved to form Christ in the soul, and transform the whole person into his likeness and image. This they will not effect where their relation unto him is not understood—where they are not received and learned as a revelation of him, with the mystery of the will and wisdom of God in him. For whereas he is our life, and in our living unto God we do not so much live as he liveth in us, and the life which we lead in the flesh is by the faith of him—so that we have neither principle nor power of spiritual life, but in, by, and from him—whatever knowledge we have of the truth, if it do not effect a union between him and our souls, it will be lifeless in us, and unprofitable unto us. It is learning the truth as it is in Jesus, which alone reneweth the image of God in us: Eph. iv. 21–24. Where it is otherwise—where men have notions of evan-

gelical truths, but know not Christ in them—whatever they profess, when they come really to examine themselves, they will find them of no use unto them, but that all things between God and their souls are stated on natural light and common presumptions.

CHAPTER VII.

Power and Efficacy Communicated unto the Office of Christ, for the Salvation of the Church, from his Person.

It is by the exercise and discharge of the office of Christ—as the king, priest, and prophet of the church—that we are redeemed, sanctified, and saved. Thereby doth he immediately communicate all Gospel benefits unto us—give us an access unto God here by grace, and in glory hereafter; for he saves us, as he is the mediator between God and man. But hereon an inquiry may be made—whence it is that the acts and duties of this office of Christ, in their exercise and discharge, should have such a power and efficacy, with respect unto their supernatural and eternal ends; for the things which depend upon them, which are effected by them, are all the principal means of the glory of God, and the only concernments of the souls of men. And this, I say, is his holy, mysterious person; from thence alone all power and efficacy is derived, and transfused into his offices, and into all that is due in the discharge of them.

A truth this is, of that importance, that the declaration and demonstration of it is the principal design of one entire book of the holy Scriptures, viz., of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle unto the Hebrews. That the glorious excellency of the person of Christ doth enable him, in the discharge of his offices, to accomplish those ends, —which none other, though vested with the same offices, could, in the exercise of them, attain unto—is the sum and substance of the doctrinal part of that discourse. Here, therefore, we must a little fix our meditations—and our interest calls us thereunto. For if it be so, it is evident that we can receive no good, no benefit, by virtue of any office of Christ, nor any fruits of their exercise, without an actual respect of faith unto his person, whence all their life and power is derived.

God gave of old both kings, priests, and prophets, unto the church. He both anointed them unto their offices, directed them in their discharge, was present with them in their work, and accepted of their duties; yet by none of them, nor by all of them together, was

the church supernaturally enlightened, internally ruled, or eternally saved: nor could it so be. Some of them—as Moses in particular—had as much power, and as great a presence of God with him, as any mere man could be made partaker of; yet was he not, in his ministry, the saviour of the church—nor could he be so any otherwise than typically and temporally. The ministry of them all was subservient unto that end which, by its own power, it could not attain.

It is evident, therefore, that the redemption and salvation of the church do not depend merely on this—that God hath given one to be the king, priest, and prophet of the church, by the actings of which offices it is redeemed and saved; but on the person of him who was so given unto us: as is fully attested, Isa. ix. 6, 7.

This must be declared.

Two things were required, in general, unto the person of Christ, that his offices might be effectual unto the salvation of the church, and without which they could not so have been. And they are such, as that their contrivance in the constitution of one and the same person, no created wisdom could reach unto. Wherefore the infinite wisdom of God is most gloriously manifested therein.

I. The first of these is, that he should have a nature provided for him, which originally was not his own. For in his divine nature, singly considered, he had no such relation unto them for whom he was to discharge his offices, as was necessary to communicate the benefit of them, nor could he discharge their principal duties. God could not die, nor rise again, nor be exalted to be a prince and a saviour, in his divine nature. Nor was there that especial alliance between it and ours, as should give us an especial interest in what was done thereby.

It was mankind in whose behalf he was to exercise these offices. He was not to bear them with respect immediately unto the angels; and, therefore, he took not their nature on him. Οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται—"He took not the nature of angels unto him;" (Heb. ii. 16;) because he was not to be a mediator for them, a saviour unto them. Those of them who had sinned were left unto everlasting ruin; and those who retained their original righteousness needed no redemption. But God prepared a body for him—that is, a human nature: Heb. x. 5. The promise hereof—viz., that he should be of the seed of the woman—was the foundation of the church; that is, he was made so unto the church in and by that promise: Gen. iii. 15. In the accomplishment thereof he was "made of a woman," that so he might be "made under the law;" (Gal. iv. 4;) and "took upon him the seed of Abraham." For because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, "he also himself took part of the same:" Heb. ii. 14. For "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,

that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God:" verse 17. And this was absolutely necessary unto the discharge of his offices, on the twofold account before mentioned. For—

(1.) Those acts of his offices, whereon the sanctification and salvation of the church do principally depend, could not be performed but in and by that nature. Therein alone could he yield obedience unto the law, that it might be fulfilled in us—without which we could not stand in judgment before God. See Rom. viii. 3, x. 3, 4. Therein alone could he undergo the curse of the law, or be made a curse for us, that the blessing might come upon us: Gal. iii. 13, 14. It was necessary that, as a priest, he should have something of his own to offer unto God, to make atonement for sin: Heb. viii. 3. The like may be said of his whole ministry on the earth—of all the effects of his incarnation.

(2.) Herein that cognation and alliance between him and the church, which were necessary to entitle it unto a participation of the benefits of his mediation, do depend. For hereby he became our *göel*—the next of kin—unto whom belonged the right of redemption, and from whom alone we could claim relief and succour in our lost condition. This is divinely and at large declared by the apostle, Heb. ii. 10–18. Having at large explained this context in our exposition of that chapter, and therein declared both the necessity and benefit of the cognation between the church and its High Priest, I shall not here farther insist upon it. See to the same purpose, Eph. v. 25–27. Wherefore, had he not been partaker of our nature, we could have received no benefit—not that without which we must eternally perish—by any office that he could have undertaken. This, therefore, was necessary unto the constitution of his person, with respect unto his offices. But—

II. There was yet more required thereunto, or to render his *offices* effectual unto their proper ends. Not one of them could have been so, had he been no more than a man—had he had no nature but ours. This I shall particularly demonstrate, considering them in their usual distribution—unto the glory of his divine person, and our own edification in believing.

(1.) He could not have been the great and singular *prophet* of the church, had he been a man only, though ever so excellent and glorious; and that for these three reasons:—

[1.] He was to be the prophet of the whole catholic church; that is, of all the elect of God, of all that shall be saved in all ages and places, from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof. He had a personal ministry for the instruction of the church, whilst he was on the earth; but his prophetical office was not confined there-

unto. For that was limited unto one nation, Matt. xv. 24; Rom. xv. 8, and was for a short season only. But the church was never without a prophet—that is, one on whom it was incumbent to reveal unto it, and instruct it in, the will of God—nor can be so unto the consummation of all things. This is Christ alone. For—

1*st*, I take it for granted that, from the beginning, from the giving of the first promise, the Son of God did, in an especial manner, undertake the care of the church—as unto all the ends of the wisdom, will, and grace of God; and I take it for granted here, because I have proved it at large elsewhere. It evidently followeth on the eternal compact between the Father and him unto this end. In the work which belonged hereunto—that which concerned its instruction in the will of God, its saving illumination and spiritual wisdom, is of such importance, as that, without it, none can be partaker of any other blessings whatever. In this instruction and illumination consists the discharge of the prophetical office of Christ.

2*dly*, Upon the account of his susception of his office even before his incarnation, considered as God, he is said to act in it so as to be sent of God unto his work, Micah v. 2, "The Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." His goings forth are not his eternal generation, which consists in one individual eternal act of the Father; but it is the egress, the exercise of his power and care for the church, that is so expressed. These were from the beginning the first foundation of the church, in answer unto his everlasting counsels, Zech. ii. 8, 9, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you;" and "I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me." He who is sent calleth himself "The LORD of hosts," and affirms that he will destroy the nations by the shaking of his hand; who can be no other but God himself. That is, it was the Son of God, who was to be incarnate, as is declared in the next words: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee," verses 10, 11. He promiseth that he will dwell in the midst of the people; which was accomplished when "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," John i. 14; which was the time of the calling of the Gentiles, when many nations were to be joined unto the Lord; and those that were so called were to be his people: "They shall be my people." And yet in all this he was sent by the Lord of hosts: "Thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee." Wherefore,

with respect unto his susception of his offices towards the church, the Lord of hosts in the person of the Son is said to be sent by the Lord of hosts; that is, in the person of the Father. So was he the prophet of the church even before his incarnation, sent or designed by the Father to instruct it—to communicate spiritual and saving light unto it. So he testified concerning himself unto the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58. Which, as it invincibly proves his eternal pre-existence unto his incarnation, so it is not only intended. He was so before Abraham, as that the care of the church was then and always from the beginning on him. And he discharged this office four ways:—

(1*st*,) By personal appearances in the likeness of human nature, in the shape of a man, as an indication of his future incarnation; and under those appearances instructing the church. So he appeared unto Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, as I have proved elsewhere. And those peculiar appearances of the person of the Son for the instruction of believers, are a full demonstration that the care and work of it were committed unto him in a peculiar manner. And I am not without thoughts, although I see some difficulty in it, that the whole Old Testament, wherein God perpetually treats with men by an assumption of human affections unto himself, so to draw us with the cords of a man, proceeded from the person of the Son, in a preparation for, and prospect of, his future incarnation.

(2*dly*,) By the ministry of angels. Upon his undertaking to be the mediator for the church with God, the angels were in a peculiar manner put into dependence on him, even as he became a new and immediate head unto the whole creation. This belonged unto that especial glory which he had with the Father "before the world was," whereof we have treated before. All things were to be anew gathered into a head in him, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Eph. i. 10. And he became "the first-born of every creature," Col. i. 15, the Lord and proprietor of them. Hence the whole ministry of angels was subordinate unto him; and whatever instruction was thereby given unto the church in the mind and will of God, it was immediately from him, as the great prophet of the church.

(3*dly*,) By sending his Holy Spirit to inspire, act, and guide the prophets, by whom God would reveal himself. God spake unto them by the "mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began," Luke i. 70. But it was the Spirit of Christ that was in them that spake by them, that revealed the things which concerned the redemption and salvation of the church, 1 Peter i. 11, 12. And by this Spirit he himself preached unto those that were disobedient in the days of Noah, who are now in prison for their dis-

obedience, 1 Peter iii. 19, 20. For he was so the prophet of the church always as to tender manifold instructions unto the perishing, unbelieving world. Hence is he said to lighten "every man that cometh into the world," John i. 9, by one way or other communicating to them some notices of God and his will; for his light shineth in, or irradiates darkness itself—that darkness which is come on the minds of men by sin—though the "darkness comprehend it not," verse 5.

(*4thly,*) By the ministry of holy men, acted and moved by his Spirit. So he gave forth the word that was written for an everlasting rule of faith and obedience unto the church.

Thus were the office and work of instructing and illuminating of the church on his hand alone from the beginning, and thus were they by him discharged. This was not a work for him who was no more but a man. His human nature had no existence until the fulness of time, the latter days, and therefore could effect or operate nothing before. And whereas the apostle distinguisheth between the speaking of God in the Son and his speaking in the prophets, opposing the one to the other, (Heb i. 1, 2,) he doth it with respect unto his personal ministry unto the Church of the Jews, and not with respect unto his being the peculiar fountain of life and light unto the whole church in all ages.

It is true, we have under the Gospel many unspeakable advantages from the prophetical office of Christ, above what they enjoyed under the Old Testament; but he was the prophet of the church equally in all ages. Only he hath given out the knowledge of the mind of God in different degrees and measures; that which was most perfect being for many reasons reserved unto the times of the Gospel; the sum whereof is, that God designed him unto a pre-eminence above all in his own personal ministry.

If any shall now inquire how the Lord Christ could be the prophet of the church before he took our nature on him and dwelt among us; I shall also ask how they suppose him to be the prophet of the church now he hath left the world and is gone to heaven, so as that we neither see him nor hear him any more? If they shall say that he is so by his Spirit, his Word, and the ministry which he hath ordained; I say, so was he the prophet of the church before his incarnation also. To confine the offices of Christ, as unto their virtue, power and efficacy, unto the times of the Gospel only, is utterly to evacuate the first promise, with the covenant of grace founded thereon. And their minds are secretly influenced by a disbelief of his divine person, who suppose that the respect of the church unto Christ, in faith, love, trust, and instruction, commenceth from the date of his incarnation.

[2.] The full comprehension of the mind and will of God, of the whole divine counsel concerning his glory in the sanctification and salvation of the church, could not at once reside in the mind of any mere creature. Yet was this necessary unto him who was to be the prophet of the church; that is, the fountain of truth, life, and knowledge unto it. Hence is his name "Wonderful, Counsellor," as he who was participant of all the eternal counsels of God; whereon in him as incarnate all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge were hid, Col. ii. 3. In him this could be alone, in whom was life, and "the life was the light of men," John i. 4. God did reveal his mind and will by angels and men. But as he did it at sundry times, so he did it by several parts, or various parcels—not only as the church was fit to receive it, but as they were able to communicate it. The whole of the divine counsels could not be comprehended, and so not declared, by any of them. Hence the angels themselves—notwithstanding their residence in the presence of God, beholding his face, and all the glorious messages wherein they were employed—learned more of his mind after the personal ministry of Christ, and the revelation of the mysteries of his counsel therein, than ever they knew before, Eph. iii. 8, 9, 11; 1 Peter i. 12. And on the account of their imperfection in the comprehension of his counsels, it is said that "he charged his angels with folly," Job iv. 18. And the best of the prophets not only received divine truth by parcels, but comprehended not the depths of the revelations made unto them, 1 Peter i. 11, 12.

To this purpose is that divine testimony, John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It is of all the prophets concerning whom it is affirmed, that no man hath seen God at any time. So is it evident in the antithesis between Moses the principal of them, and the Lord Christ, in the verse foregoing: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Wherefore no man, no other man or prophet whatever, hath seen God at any time; that is, had a perfect comprehension of his counsels, his mind and will, as they were to be declared unto the church. This is the privilege of the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; not only as being his eternal delight and love, but also as one acquainted with all his secret counsels—as his fellow and participant of all his bosom thoughts.

He says, that "all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them," John x. 8. This some of old impiously applied unto the prophets of the Old Testament; whereas he intended it only of those false prophets who pretended of themselves that they, any of them, were the Messiah, the great

Shepherd of the sheep, whom his elect sheep would not attend unto. But it is true that all who went before him, neither separately nor jointly, had the knowledge of God, so as to declare him fully unto the church.

It is the most fond and wicked imagination of the Socinians, invented to countenance their disbelief and hatred of his divine person, that during the time of his flesh he was taken up into heaven, and there taught the doctrine of the Gospel, as Mohammed feigned concerning himself and his Alkoran. The reason and foundation of his perfect knowledge of God was, his being the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and not a fictitious rapture of his human nature.

To this purpose have we his own testimony, John iii. 13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." The matter whereof he treats is the revelation of heavenly things. For, finding Nicodemus slow in the understanding of the doctrine and necessity of regeneration, which yet was plain and evident in comparison of some other heavenly mysteries, he asks of him, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not," (things wrought in the earth and in your own breasts,) "how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" if I declare unto you the deep counsels of the will of God above, verse 12. But hereon a question might arise, how he should himself come to the knowledge of these heavenly things whereof they had never heard before, and which no other man could tell them of, especially considering what he had said before, verse 11, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Hereof he gives an account in these words. Wherefore the ascending into heaven, which he denies unto all men whatever—"No man hath ascended up to heaven"—is an entrance into all the divine, heavenly counsels of God; no man either hath or ever had a full comprehension of these heavenly things but he himself alone. And unto him it is ascribed on a double account: first, That he came down from heaven; secondly, That when he did so, he yet still continued in heaven: which two properties give us such a description of the person of Christ as declare him a full possessor of all the counsels of God. He descended from heaven in his incarnation, whereby he became the Son of man; and he is and was then in heaven in the essence and glory of his divine nature. This is the full of what we assert. In the knowledge and revelation of heavenly mysteries, unto the calling, sanctification, and salvation of the church, doth the prophetical office of Christ consist. This he positively affirms could not otherwise be, but that he who came down from heaven was also at the same instant in heaven. This is that glorious

person whereof we speak. He who, being always in heaven in the glory and essence of his divine nature, came down from heaven, not locally, by a mutation of his residence, but by dispensation in the assumption of our nature into personal union with himself—he alone is meet and able to be the prophet of the church in the revelation of the heavenly mysteries of the counsels of the will of God. In him alone were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3, because in him alone "dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily," verse 9.

I do not hereby ascribe the infusion of omniscience, of infinite understanding, wisdom, and knowledge, into the human nature of Christ. It was and is a creature, finite and limited, nor is a capable subject of properties absolutely infinite and immense. Filled it was with light and wisdom to the utmost capacity of a creature; but it was so, not by being changed into a divine nature or essence, but by the communication of the Spirit unto it without measure. The Spirit of the LORD did rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD, and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD, Isa. xi. 2, 3.

[3.] The Spirit of God dwelling in him, in all the fulness of his graces and gifts, gave him an understanding peculiar unto himself; as above that of all creatures, so beneath the essential omniscience of the divine nature. Hence some things, as he was a man, he knew not, (Mark xiii. 32,) but as they were given him by revelation, Rev. i. 1. But he is the prophet of the church in his whole entire person, and revealed the counsel of God, as he was in heaven in the bosom of the Father. Cursed be he that trusteth in man, that maketh flesh his arm, as to the revelations of the counsels of God. Here lies the safety, the security, the glory of the church. How deplorable is the darkness of mankind, in their ignorance of God and heavenly things! In what ways of vanity and misery have the generality of them wandered ever since our first apostasy from God! Nothing but hell is more full of horror and confusion than the minds and ways of men destitute of heavenly light. How miserably did those among them who boasted themselves to be wise, wax foolish in their imaginations! How wofully did all their inquiries after the nature and will of God, their own state, duty, and happiness, issue in curiosity, uncertainty, vanity, and falsehood! He who is infinitely good and compassionate, did from the beginning give some relief in this woful state, by such parcels of divine revelations as he thought meet to communicate unto them by the prophets of old—such as they were able to receive. By them he set up a light shining in a dark place, as the light of stars in the night. But it was the rising of the

Sun of Righteousness alone that dispelled the darkness that was on the earth, the thick darkness that was on the people, bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel. The divine person of the Son of God, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath now made known all things unto the church, giving us the perfect idea and certainty of all sacred truth, and the full assurance of things invisible and eternal.

Three things are necessary, that we may have the benefit and comfort of divine light or truth—1*st*, The fulness of its revelation; 2*dly*, The infallibility of it; and, 3*dly*, The authority from whence it doth proceed. If either of these be wanting, we cannot attain unto stability and assurance in the faith of it, or obedience unto it.

1*st*, *Full* it must be, to free us from all attempts of fear that any thing is detained or hidden from us that were needful for us to know. Without this the mind of man can never come to rest in the knowledge of truth. All that he knows may be useless unto him, for the want of that which he neither doth nor can know, because not revealed.

2*dly*, And it must be *infallible* also. For this divine truth whereof we treat, being concerning things unseen—heavenly, eternal mysteries, transcending the reach of human reason—nothing but the absolute infallibility of the revealer can bring the mind of man to assurance and acquiescency. And whereas the same truth enjoins unto us duties, many of them contrary unto our inclinations and cross unto our several interests—the great guides of corrupted nature—the revelation of it must proceed from sovereign authority, that the will may comply with the mind in the embracement of it. All these are absolutely secured in the divine person of the great prophet of the church. His infinite wisdom, his infinite goodness, his essential veracity, his sovereign authority over all, give the highest assurance whereof a created understanding is capable, that nothing is detained from us—that there is no possibility of error or mistake in what is declared unto us, nor any pretence left of declining obedience unto the commands of the truth that we do receive. This gives the soul assured rest and peace in the belief of things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can enter into the heart of man to conceive." Upon the assurance of this truth alone can it with joy prefer things invisible and eternal above all present satisfactions and desires. In the persuasion hereof can it forego the best of present enjoyments, and undergo the worst of present evils; namely, in the experience of its present efficacy, and choice of that future recompense which it doth secure. And he believes not the Gospel unto his own advantage, or

the glory of God, whose faith rests not in the divine person of Jesus Christ, the great prophet of the church. And he who there finds rest unto his soul, dares not admit of any copartners with him as to instruction in the mind of God.

3*dly*, It was requisite unto the office of this great prophet of the church, and the discharge thereof, that he should have power and authority to send the Holy Spirit to make his revelations of divine truth effectual unto the minds of men. For the church which he was to instruct, was not only in darkness, by reason of ignorance and want of objective light or divine revelations, but was incapacitated to receive spiritual things in a due manner when revealed. Wherefore, it was the work of this prophet, not only to make known and declare the doctrines of truth, which are our external directive light, but also to irradiate and illuminate our minds, so that we might savingly apprehend them. And it is no wonder if those who are otherwise minded, who suppose themselves able to receive spiritual things, the things of God, in a due manner, upon their external proposal unto them, are regardless of the divine person of Christ as the prophet of the church. But hereon they will never have experience of the life and power of the doctrine of the Gospel, if the apostle is to be believed, 1 Cor. ii. 9–12. Now, this internal illumination of the minds of men unto the acknowledgment of the truth can be wrought in them only by the Holy Spirit of God, Eph. i. 17–19; 2 Cor. iii. 18. None, therefore, could be the prophet of the church, but he who had the power to send the Holy Spirit to enable it to receive his doctrine by the saving illumination of the minds of men. And this alone he could do, whose Spirit he is, proceeding from him; whom he therefore frequently promised so to send.

Without a respect unto these things, we cannot really be made partakers of the saving benefits and fruits of the prophetical office of Christ. And this we can have only in the exercise of faith on his divine person, which is the eternal spring from whence this office derives all life and efficacy.

The command of God, in respect unto him as the prophet of the church, is, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him." Unless we actually regard him by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, we can perform no duty aright in the hearing of him, nor shall we learn the truth as we ought. Hence it is that those who deny his divine person, though they pretend to attend unto him as the teacher of the church, do yet learn no truth from him, but embrace pernicious errors in the stead thereof. So it is with the Socinians, and all that follow them. For whereas they scarcely own any other office of Christ but his prophetical—looking on him as a man sent to teach the mind of God, and to confirm his doctrine by

his sufferings, whereon he was afterward highly exalted of God—they learn nothing from him in a due manner.

But this respect unto the person of Christ is that which will ingenerate in us all those holy qualifications that are necessary to enable us to know the mind and will of God. For hence do reverence, humility, faith, delight, and assurance, arise and flow; without whose continual exercise, in vain shall men hope to learn the will of God by the utmost of their endeavours. And the want of these things is the cause of much of that lifeless, unsanctified knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel which is amongst many. They learn not the truth from Christ, so as to expect all teachings from his divine power. Hence they never come to know it, either in its native beauty drawing the soul into the love and delight of what they know, or in its transforming efficacy changing the mind into its own image and likeness.

(2.) The same also is the state of things with respect unto his *kingly office* and *power*. But this I have at large treated on elsewhere, and that much unto the same purpose; namely, in the exposition of the 3d verse of the 1st chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews. Wherefore I shall not here enlarge upon it.

Some seem to imagine, that the kingly power of Christ towards the church consists only in external rule by the Gospel and the laws thereof, requiring obedience unto the officers and rulers that he hath appointed therein. It is true, that this also belongs unto his kingly power and rule; but to suppose that it consisteth solely therein, is an ebullition from the poisonous fountain of the denial of his divine person. For if he be not God over all, whatever in words may be pretended or ascribed unto him, he is capable of no other rule or power. But indeed no one act of his kingly office can be aright conceived or acknowledged, without a respect had unto his divine person. I shall instance only unto this purpose in two things in general.

[1.] The *extent of his power and rule* gives evidence hereunto. It is over the whole creation of God. "All power is given him in heaven and earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. "All things are put under his feet, he only excepted who put all things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 27; and he is made "head over all things unto the church," Eph. i. 22. Not only those who are above the rule of external law, as the holy angels; and those who have cast off all such rule, as the devils themselves; but all things that in their own nature are not capable of obedience to an external law or rule, as the whole inanimate creation, heaven, and earth, and the sea, with all things in them and under them, (Phil. ii. 10,) with the dead bodies of men, which he shall raise at the last day.

For this power over the whole creation is not only a moral right to rule and govern it; but it is also accompanied with virtue, force, or almighty power, to act, order, and dispose of it at his pleasure. So is it described by the apostle from the Psalmist, Heb. i. 10–12, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." That power is required unto his kingly office whereby he created all things in the beginning, and shall change them all, as a man folds up a vesture, in the end. Omnipotency, accompanied with eternity and immutability, are required hereunto.

It is a vain imagination, to suppose that this power can reside in a mere creature, however glorified and exalted. All essential divine properties are concurrent with it, and inseparable from it. And where are the properties of God, there is the nature of God; for his being and his properties are one and the same.

If the Lord Christ, as king of the church, be only a mere man, and be as such only to be considered, however he may be exalted and glorified—however he may be endowed with honour, dignity, and authority—yet he cannot put forth or act any real physical power immediately and directly, but where he is present. But this is in heaven only; for the heaven must receive him "until the times of the restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21. And hereon his rule and power would be the greatest disadvantage unto the church that could befall it. For suppose it immediately under the rule of God, even the Father; his omnipotency and omnipresence, his omniscience and infinite wisdom—whereby he could be always present with every one of them, know all their wants, and give immediate relief according to the counsel of his will—were a stable foundation for faith to rest upon, and an everlasting spring of consolation. But now, whereas all power, all judgment, all rule, is committed unto the Son, and the Father doth nothing towards the church but in and by him, if he have not the same divine power and properties with him, the foundation of the church's faith is cast down, and the spring of its consolation utterly stopped up.

I cannot believe in him as my heavenly king, who is not able by himself, and by the virtue of his presence with me, to make what changes and alterations he pleaseth in the minds of men, and in the whole creation of God, to relieve, preserve, and deliver me, and to raise my body at the last day.

To suppose that the Lord Christ, as the king and head of the church, hath not an infinite, divine power, whereby he is able always

to relieve, succour, save, and deliver it—if it were to be done by the alteration of the whole or any part of God's creation, so as that the fire should not burn, nor the water overwhelm them, nor men be able to retain their thoughts or ability one moment to afflict them; and that their distresses are not always effects of his wisdom, and never from the defect of his power—is utterly to overthrow all faith, hope, and the whole of religion itself.

Ascribe therefore unto the Lord Christ, in the exercise of his kingly office, only a moral power, operative by rules and laws, with the help of external instruments—deprive him of omnipresence and omniscience, with infinite, divine power and virtue, to be acted at his pleasure in and over the whole creation—and you rase the foundation of all Christian faith and hope to the ground.

There are no true believers who will part with their faith herein for the whole world; namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able, by his divine power and presence, immediately to aid, assist, relieve, and deliver them in every moment of their surprisals, fears, and dangers, in every trial or duty they may be called unto, in every difficulty they have to conflict withal. And to expect these things any otherwise but by virtue of his divine nature, is wofully to deceive our own souls. For this is the work of God.

[2.] The rule of Christ, as king of the church, is *internal* and *spiritual*, over the minds, souls, and consciences of all that do believe. There is no one gracious acting of soul in any one believer, at any time in the whole world, either in opposition unto sin or the performance of duty, but it is influenced and under the guidance of the kingly power of Christ. I suppose we have herein not only the common faith, but also the common spiritual sense and experience, of them all. They know that in their spiritual life it is he that liveth in them as the efficient cause of all its acts, and that without him they can do nothing. Unto him they have respect in every the most secret and retired actings of grace, not only performed as under his eye, but by his assistance; on every occasion do they immediately, in the internal actings of their minds, look unto him, as one more present with their souls than they are with themselves; and have no thoughts of the least distance of his knowledge or power. And two things are required hereto.

1*st*, That he be καρδιογνώστης—that he have an actual inspection into all the frames, dispositions, thoughts, and internal actings, of all believers in the whole world, at all times, and every moment. Without this, he cannot bear that rule in their souls and consciences which we have described, nor can they act faith in him, as their occasions do require. No man can live by faith on Christ, no man can depend on his sovereign power, who is not persuaded that all

the frames of his heart, all the secret groans and sighs of his spirit, all the inward labourings of his soul against sin, and after conformity to himself, are continually under his eye and cognizance. Wherefore it is said, that all things are naked and opened unto his eyes, Heb. iv. 13. And he says of himself, that he "searcheth" (that is, knoweth) "the hearts and reins of men," Rev. ii. 23. And if these things are not the peculiar properties of the divine nature, I know nothing that may be so esteemed.

2*dly*, There is required hereunto an influence of power into all the actings of the souls of believers;—an intimate, efficacious operation with them in every duty, and under every temptation. These all of them do look for, expect, and receive from him, as the king and head of the church. This also is an effect of divine and infinite power. And to deny these things unto the Lord Christ, is to rase the foundation of Christian religion. Neither faith in, nor love unto him, nor dependence on him, nor obedience unto his authority, can be preserved one moment, without a persuasion of his immediate *intuition* and inspection into the hearts, minds, and thoughts of all men, with a real *influence* into all the actings of the life of God in all them that believe. And the want of the faith hereof is that which hath disjoined the minds of many from adherence unto him, and hath produced a lifeless carcase of the Christian religion, instead of the saving power thereof.

(3.) The same may be said concerning his *sacerdotal office*, and all the acts of it. It was in and by the human nature that he offered himself a sacrifice for us. He had somewhat of his own to offer, Heb. viii. 3; and to this end a body was prepared for him, chap. x. 5. But it was not the work of a man, by one offering, and that of himself, to expiate the sins of the whole church, and for ever to perfect them that are sanctified, which he did, Heb. x. 14. God was to purchase his church "with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. But this also I have spoken to at large elsewhere.

This is the sum of what we plead for: We can have no due consideration of the offices of Christ, can receive no benefit by them, nor perform any act of duty with respect unto them, or any of them, unless faith in his divine person be actually exercised as the foundation of the whole. For that is it whence all their glory, power, and efficacy are derived. Whatever, therefore, we do with respect unto his rule, whatever we receive by the communication of his Spirit and grace, whatever we learn from his Word by the teachings of his Spirit, whatever benefit we believe, expect, and receive, by his sacrifice and intercession on our behalf; our faith in them all, and concerning them all, is terminated on his divine person. The church is saved by his offices, because they are his. This is the substance of

the testimony given concerning him, by God, even the Father, 1 John v. 10, 11. "This is the record" that God hath testified concerning his Son, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Eternal life is given unto us, as it was wrought out and procured by the mediation of Christ on our behalf. But yet in him it was originally, and from him do we receive it in the discharge of his office; for this life is in the Son of God.

Hence it is that all those by whom the divine person of Christ is denied, are forced to give such a description of his offices, as that it is utterly impossible that the church should be saved by the discharge of them.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Faith of the Church under the Old Testament in and concerning the Person of Christ.

A brief view of the faith of the church under the Old Testament concerning the divine person of Christ, shall close these discourses, and make way for those that ensue, wherein our own duty with respect thereunto shall be declared.

That the faith of all believers, from the foundation of the world, had a respect unto him, I shall afterwards demonstrate; and to deny it, is to renounce both the Old Testament and the New. But that this faith of theirs did principally respect his person, is what shall here be declared. Therein they knew was laid the foundation of the counsels of God for their deliverance, sanctification, and salvation. Otherwise it was but little they clearly understood of his office, or the way whereby he would redeem the church.

The apostle Peter, in the confession he made of him, (Matt. xvi. 16,) exceeded the faith of the Old Testament in this, that he applied the promise concerning the Messiah unto that individual person: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—he that was to be the Redeemer and Saviour of the church. Howbeit Peter then knew little of the way and manner whereby he was principally so to be. And therefore, when he began to declare them unto his disciples—namely, that they should be by his death and sufferings—he in particular was not able to comply with it, but, saith he, "Master, that be far from thee," verse 22. As "flesh and blood"—that is, his own reason and understanding—did not reveal or declare Him unto Peter to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, but the Father which is in heaven; so he stood in need of fresh assistance

from the same almighty hand to believe that He should redeem and save his church by his death. And therefore he did refuse the external revelation and proposition of it, though made by Christ himself, until he received internal aid from above. And to suppose that we have faith now in Christ or his death on any other terms, is an evidence that we have no faith at all.

Wherefore, the faith of the saints under the Old Testament did principally respect the person of Christ—both what it was, and what it was to be in the fulness of time, when he was to become the seed of the woman. What his especial work was to be, and the mystery of the redemption of the church thereby, they referred unto his own wisdom and grace;—only, they believed that by him they should be saved from the hand of all their enemies, or all the evil that befell them on the account of the first sin and apostasy from God.

God gave them, indeed, *representations* and prefigurations of his office and work also. He did so by the high priest of the law, the tabernacle, with all the sacrifices and services thereunto belonging. All that Moses did, as a faithful servant in the house of God, was but a "testimony of those things which were to be spoken after," Heb. iii. 5. Howbeit the apostle tells us that all those things had but a "shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves," Heb. x. 1. And although they are now to us full of light and instruction, evidently expressing the principal works of Christ's mediation, yet were they not so unto them. For the veil is now taken off from them in their accomplishment, and a declaration is made of the counsels of God in them by the Gospel. The meanest believer may now find out more of the work of Christ in the types of the Old Testament, than any prophets or wise men could have done of old. Therefore they always earnestly longed for their accomplishment—that the day might break, and the shadows fly away by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. But as unto his person, they had glorious revelations concerning it; and their faith in him was the life of all their obedience.

The *first promise*, which established a new intercourse between God and man, was concerning his incarnation—that he should be the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15; that is, that the Son of God should be "made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. From the giving of that promise the faith of the whole church was fixed on him whom God would send in our nature, to redeem and save them. Other way of acceptance with him there was none provided, none declared, but only by faith in this promise. The design of God in this promise—which was to reveal and propose the only way which in his wisdom and grace he had prepared for the deliverance

of mankind from the state of sin and apostasy whereinto they were cast, with the nature of the faith and obedience of the church—will not admit of any other way of salvation, but only faith in him who was thus promised to be a saviour. To suppose that men might fall off from faith in God by the revelation of himself in this promise, and yet be saved by attending to instructions given by the works of creation and providence, is an imagination that will no longer possess the minds of men than whilst they are ignorant of, or do forget, what it is to believe and to be saved.

The great promise made unto *Abraham* was, that He should *take his seed upon him*, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xii. 3, xv. 18, xxii. 18; which promise is explained by the apostle, and applied unto Christ, Gal. iii. 8. Hereon "Abraham believed on the Lord, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," Gen. xv. 6; *for* he saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced, John viii. 56.

The faith that *Jacob* instructed his sons in was—that the Shiloh should come, and unto him should be the gathering of the nations, Gen. xlix. 10. *Job's* faith was—that his Redeemer was the Living One, and that he should stand on the earth in the latter day, Job xix. 25.

The revelations made unto *David* principally concerned His person, and the glory thereof. See Ps. ii., xlv., lxviii., lxxii., cx., cxviii., especially Ps. xlv. and lxxii. compared, which give an account of their apprehensions concerning him.

The faith of *Daniel* was, that God would show mercy, for the Lord's sake, Dan. ix. 17; and of all the prophets, that the "Redeemer should come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob," Isa. lix. 20.

Of the same nature were all his *personal appearances* under the Old Testament, especially that most illustrious representation made of him unto the prophet Isaiah, chap. vi., and the glorious revelation of his name, chap. ix. 6.

It is true that both these and other prophets had revelations concerning his sufferings also. For "the Spirit of Christ that was in them testified beforehand of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow," 1 Peter i. 11;—an illustrious testimony whereunto we have given us, Ps. xxii., and Isa. liii. Nevertheless their conceptions concerning them were dark and obscure. It was his person that their faith principally regarded. Thence were they filled with desires and expectations of his coming, or his exhibition and appearance in the flesh. With the renewed promises hereof did God continually refresh the church in its straits and difficulties. And hereby did God call off the body of the people from trust in themselves, or boasting in their present privileges, which they were exceedingly prone unto.

In process of time this faith, which wrought effectually in the Church of Israel, degenerated into a lifeless opinion, that proved the ruin of it. Whilst they really lived in the faith of him as the Saviour and Redeemer of the church from all its spiritual adversaries, as he who was to make "an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness," unto whom all their present ordinances were subservient and directive; all grace, love, zeal, and patient waiting for the accomplishment of the promise, flourished among them. But in process of time, growing carnal, trusting in their own righteousness, and the privileges which they had by the law, their faith concerning the person of Christ degenerated into a corrupt, obstinate opinion, that he should be only a temporal king and deliverer; but as unto righteousness and salvation they were to trust unto themselves and the law. And this prejudicate opinion, being indeed a renunciation of all the grace of the promises of God, proved their utter ruin. For when he came in the flesh, after so many ages, filled up with continued expectations, they rejected and despised him as one that had neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired. So doth it fall out in other churches. That which was faith truly spiritual and evangelical in their first planting, becomes a lifeless opinion in succeeding ages. The same truths are still professed, but that profession springs not from the same causes, nor doth it produce the same effects in the hearts and lives of men. Hence, in process of time, some churches continue to have an appearance of the same body which they were at first, but—being examined—are like a lifeless, breathless carcase, wherein the animating Spirit of grace doth not dwell. And then is any church, as it was with that of the Jews, nigh to destruction, when it corrupts formerly professed truths, to accommodate them unto the present lusts and inclinations of men.

CHAPTER IX.

Honour due to the Person of Christ—The Nature and Causes of it.

Many other considerations of the same nature with those foregoing, relating unto the glory and honour of the person of Christ, may be taken from all the fundamental principles of religion. And our duty it is in them all, to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession"—"the Author and Finisher of our faith." I shall not insist on more, but proceed unto those principles of truth which are immediately directive of our duty towards him; without diligent attendance whereunto, we do but in vain bear the name of Chris-

tians. And the substance of what is designed may be included in the following assertion:—

"The glory, life, and power of Christian religion, as Christian religion, and as seated in the souls of men, with all the acts and duties which properly belong thereunto, and are, therefore, peculiarly Christian, and all the benefits and privileges we receive by it, or by virtue of it, with the whole of the honour and glory that arise unto God thereby, have all of them their formal nature and reason from their respect and relation unto the person of Christ; nor is he a Christian who is otherwise minded."

In the confirmation hereof it will appear what judgment ought to be passed on that inquiry—which, after the uninterrupted profession of the catholic church for so many ages of a faith unto the contrary, is begun to be made by some amongst us—namely, *Of what use is the person of Christ in religion?* For it proceeds on this supposition, and is determined accordingly—that there is something in religion wherein the person of Christ is of no use at all;—a vain imagination, and such as is destructive unto the whole real intercourse between God and man, by the one and only Mediator!

The respect which we have in all acts of religion unto the person of Christ may be reduced unto these four heads: I. Honour. II. Obedience. III. Conformity. IV. The use we make of him, for the attaining and receiving of all Gospel privileges—all grace and glory. And hereunto the whole of our religion, as it is Christian or evangelical, may be reduced.

I. The person of Christ is *the object of divine honour and worship.* The formal object and reason hereof is the divine nature, and its essential infinite excellencies. For they are nothing but that respect unto the Divine Being which is due unto it from all rational creatures, regulated by revelation, and enforced by divine operations. Wherefore the person of Christ is primarily the object of divine honour and worship, upon the account of his divine nature and excellencies. And those who, denying that nature in him, do yet pretend to worship him with divine and religious adoration, do but worship a golden calf of their own setting up; for a Christ who is not over all, God blessed for ever, is not better. And it implies a contradiction, that any creature should, on any account, be the immediate, proper object of divine worship; unless the divine essential excellencies be communicated unto it, or transfused into it, whereby it would cease to be a creature. For that worship is nothing but the ascription of divine excellencies unto what is so worshipped.

But we now consider the Lord Christ in his whole entire person, the Son of God incarnate, "God manifest in the flesh." His infinite condescension, in the assumption of our nature, did no way divest him of his divine essential excellencies. For a time, they were shadowed and veiled thereby from the eyes of men; when "he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant." But he eternally and unchangeably continued "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6, 7. He can no more really and essentially, by any act of condescension or humiliation, cease to be God, than God can cease to be. Wherefore, his being clothed with our nature derogates nothing from the true reason of divine worship due unto him, but adds an effectual motive unto it. He is, therefore, the immediate object of all duties of religion, internal and external; and in the dispensation of God towards us, none of them can be performed in a due manner without a respect unto him.

This, then, in the first place, is to be confirmed; namely, that all divine honour is due unto the Son of God incarnate—that is, the person of Christ.

John v. 23: It is the will of the Father, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." Some considerations on this divine testimony will confirm our position. It is of the Son incarnate that the words are spoken—as all judgment was committed unto him by the Father, as he was "*sent*" by him, verse 22—that is, of the whole person of Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office. And with respect hereunto it is that the mind of God is peculiarly revealed. The way whereby God manifesteth his will, that all men should thus honour the Son, as they honour the Father, is by committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him, verses 20–22, "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Not that these things are the *formal* reason and cause of the divine honour which is to be given him; but they are reasons of it, and motives unto it, in that they are evidences of his being the Son of God.

But it may be said, What need is there that the Father should so interpose an act of his will and sovereign pleasure as to this honouring of the Son, seeing the sole cause and reason of this divine honour is the divine nature, which the Son is no less partaker of than the Father? I answer—

(1.) He doth not in this command intend the honour and worship of Christ absolutely as God, but *distinctly as the Son;* which peculiar worship was not known under the Old Testament, but was now declared necessary in the committing all power, authority, and judgment unto him. This is the honour whereof we speak.

(2.) He doth it, lest any should conceive that "as he was now sent of the Father," and that in the "form of a servant," this honour should not be due unto him. And the world was then far from thinking that it was so; and many, I fear, are yet of the same mind.

He is, therefore, to be honoured by us, according to the will of God, καθὼς, "in like manner," as we honour the Father.

[1.] With the *same honour;* that is, divine, sacred, religious, and supreme. To honour the Father with other honour, is to dishonour him. When men design to give glory and honour to God which is not truly divine, it is idolatry; for this honour, in truth, is nothing but the ascription of all infinite, divine excellencies unto him. Whereon, when men ascribe unto him that which is not so, they fall into idolatry, by the worship of their own imaginations. So was it with the Israelites, when they thought to have given glory to God by making a golden calf, whereon they proclaimed a feast unto Jehovah, Exod. xxxii. 5. And so was it with the heathen in all their images of God, and the glory which they designed to give him thereby, as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 23–25. This is one kind of idolatry—as the other is—the ascribing unto creatures anything that is proper and peculiar unto God, any divine excellency. And we do not honour God the Father with one kind of honour, and the Son with another. That were not to honour the Son καθὼς, "as" we honour the Father, but in a way infinitely different from it.

[2.] In the *same manner*, with the same faith, love, reverence, and obedience, always, in all things, in all acts and duties of religion whatever.

This distinct honour is to be given unto the person of the Son by virtue of this command of the Father, though originally on the account of his oneness in nature with the Father. And our duty herein is pressed with the highest enforcement; he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father. He who denieth the Son (herein) "hath not the Father; [*but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also,*]" 1 John ii. 23. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," chap. v. 11, 12. If we are wanting herein, whatever we pretend, we do not worship nor honour God at all.

And there is reason to give this caution—reason to fear that this great fundamental principle of our religion is, if not disbelieved, yet

not much attended unto in the world. Many, who profess a respect unto the Divine Being and the worship thereof, seem to have little regard unto the person of the Son in all their religion; for although they may admit of a customary interposition of his name in their religious worship, yet the same distinct veneration of him as of the Father, they seem not to understand, or to be exercised in. Howbeit, all the acceptance of our persons and duties with God depends on this one condition—"That we honour the Son, even as we honour the Father." To honour the Son as we ought to honour the Father, is that which makes us Christians, and which nothing else will so do.

This honour of the person of Christ may be considered—in the *duties* of it, wherein it doth consist; and in the *principle*, life, or spring, of those duties.

The duties whereby we ascribe and express divine honour unto Christ may be reduced unto two heads. 1*st*, Adoration; 2*dly*, Invocation.

1*st*, Adoration is *the prostration of soul before him as God, in the acknowledgment of his divine excellencies and the ascription of them unto him.* It is expressed in the Old Testament by הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה; that is, humbly to bow down ourselves or our souls unto God. The LXX. render it constantly by προσκυνέω; which is the word used in the New Testament unto the same purpose. The Latins expressed it usually by *adoro*. And these words, though of other derivations, are of the same signification with that in the Hebrew; and they do all of them include some external sign of inward reverence, or a readiness thereunto. Hence is that expression, "He bowed down his head and worshipped," [Gen. xxiv. 26;] see [also] Ps. xcv. 6. And these external signs are of two sorts. (1*st*,) Such as are *natural* and occasional; (2*dly*,) Such as are *solemn*, stated, or instituted. Of the first sort are the lifting up of our eyes and hands towards heaven upon our thoughts of him, and sometimes the casting down of our whole persons before him; which deep thoughts with reverence will produce. Outward instituted signs of this internal adoration are all the ordinances of evangelical worship. In and by them do we solemnly profess and express our inward veneration of him. Other ways may be invented to the same purpose, but the Scripture knows them not, yea, condemns them. Such are the veneration and adoration of the pretended images of him, and of the Host, as they call it, among the Papists.

This adoration is due continually to the person of Christ, and that —as in the exercise of the office of mediation. It is due unto him from the whole rational creation of God. So is it given in charge unto the angels above. For when he brought the First-begotten into

the world, he said, Προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ; that is, הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ־לוֹ כָּל־אֱלֹהִים, "Worship him, all ye gods," Ps. xcvii. 7. "Let all the angels of God worship him," adore him, bow down before him, Heb. i. 6. See our exposition of that place;—the design of the whole chapter being to express the divine honour that is due unto the person of Christ, with the grounds thereof. This is the command given also unto the church, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him," Ps. xlv. 11.

A glorious representation hereof—whether in the church above, or in that militant here on the earth—is given us, Rev. v. 6–14, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

The especial *object* of divine adoration, the *motives* unto it, and the *nature* of it, or what it consisteth in, are here declared.

The *object* of it is Christ, not separately, but distinctly from the Father, and jointly with him. And he is proposed, 1*st*, As having fulfilled the work of his mediation in his incarnation and oblation—as a Lamb slain. 2*dly*, In his glorious exaltation—"in the midst of the throne of God." The principal thing that the heathen of old observed concerning the Christian religion, was, that in it "praises were sung to Christ as unto God."

The *motives* unto this adoration are the unspeakable benefits

which we receive by his mediation, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God," &c.

Hereon the *same* glory, the same *honour*, is ascribed unto him as unto God the Father: "*Blessing*, and *honour*, and *glory*, and *power*, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

The *nature* of this adoration is described to consist in three things. 1*st*, Solemn prostration: "And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." So also is it described, chap. iv. 10, 11. 2*dly*, In the ascription of all divine honour and glory, as is at large expressed, chap. v. 11–13. 3*dly*, In the way of expressing the design of their souls in this adoration, which is by the praises: "They sung a new song"—that is, of praise; for so are all those psalms which have that title of a new song. And in these things—namely, solemn prostration of soul in the acknowledgment of divine excellencies, ascriptions of glory and honour with praise—doth religious adoration consist. And they belong not unto the great holy society of them who worship above and here below—whose hearts are not always ready unto this solemn adoration of the Lamb, and who are not on all occasions exercised therein.

And this adoration of Christ doth differ from the adoration of God, absolutely considered, and of God as the Father, not in its nature, but merely on the account of its especial motives. The principal motive unto the adoration of God, absolutely considered, is the work of creation—the manifestation of his glory therein—with all the effects of his power and goodness thereon ensuing. So it is declared, chap. iv. 11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And the principal motive unto the adoration and worship of God as the Father, is that eternal love, grace, and goodness, which he is the fountain of in a peculiar manner, Eph. i. 4, 5. But the great motive unto the adoration of Christ is the work of redemption, Rev. v. 12, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The reason whereof is given, verses 9, 10, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood; and made us unto our God kings and priests." The adoration is the same, verse 13, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." But the immediate motives of it are different, as its objects are distinct.

Herein no small part of the life of the Christian religion doth consist. The humbling of our souls before the Lord Christ, from an

apprehension of his divine excellencies—the ascription of glory, honour, praise, with thanksgiving unto him, on the great motive of the work of redemption with the blessed effects thereof—are things wherein the life of faith is continually exercised; nor can we have any evidence of an interest in that blessedness which consists in the eternal assignation of all glory and praise unto him in heaven, if we are not exercised unto this worship of him here on earth.

2*dly*, Invocation is the second general branch of divine honour—of that honour which is due and paid unto the Son, as unto the Father. This is the first exercise of divine faith—the breath of the spiritual life. And it consisteth in two things, or hath two parts. (1*st*,) An *ascription* of all divine properties and excellencies unto him whom we invocate. This is essential unto prayer, which without it is but vain babbling. Whoever cometh unto God hereby, "must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (2*dly*,) There is in it also a *representation* of our wills, affections, and desires of our souls, unto him on whom we call, with an expectation of being heard and relieved, by virtue of his infinitely divine excellencies. This is the proper acting of faith with respect unto ourselves; and hereby it is our duty to give honour unto the person of Christ.

When he himself died in the flesh, he committed his departing soul by solemn invocation into the hands of his Father, Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." And —to evidence that it is the will of God that we should honour the Son, as we honour the Father, even as the Son himself in his human nature, who is our example, honoured the Father—he who first died in the faith of the Gospel, bequeathed his departing soul into the hands of Jesus Christ by solemn invocation, Acts vii. 59, "They stoned Stephen, ἐπικαλούμενον, solemnly invocating, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And having by faith and prayer left his own soul safe in the hands of the Lord Jesus, he adds one petition more unto him, wherewith he died: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," verse 60. Herein did he give divine honour unto Christ in the especial invocation of his name, in the highest instances that can be conceived. In his first request, wherein he committed his departing soul into his hands, he ascribed unto him divine omniscience, omnipresence, love, and power; and in the latter, for his enemies, divine authority and mercy, to be exercised in the pardon of sin. In his example is the rule established for the especial invocation of Christ for the effects of divine power and mercy.

Hence the apostle describeth the church, or believers, and distinguisheth it, or them, from all others, by the discharge of this duty, 1 Cor. i. 2, "With all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ, both their Lord and ours." To call on the name of the Lord Jesus expresseth solemn invocation in the way of religious worship. The Jews did call on the name of God. All others in their way called on the names of their gods. This is that whereby the church is distinguished from them all—it *calls on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He requires that, as we believe on God, that is, the Father, so we should believe on him also; and therein honour the Son, as we honour the Father, John xiv. 1. The nature of this faith, and the manner how it is exercised on Christ, we shall declare afterward. But the apostle, treating of the nature and efficacy of this invocation, affirms, that we cannot call on him in whom we have not believed, Rom. x. 14. Whence it follows, on the contrary, that he on whom we are bound to believe, on him it is our duty to call. So the whole Scripture is closed with a prayer of the church unto the Lord Christ, expressing their faith in him: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20.

There is not any one reason of prayer—not any one motive unto it—not any consideration of its use or efficacy—but renders this peculiar invocation of Christ a necessary duty. Two things in general are required to render the duty of invocation lawful and useful. First, That it have a proper *object.* Secondly, That it have prevalent *motives* and encouragements unto it. These in concurrence are the formal reason and ground of all religious worship in general, and of prayer in particular. So are they laid down as the foundation of all religion, Exod. xx. 2, 3, "I am the Lord thy God"—that is, the proper object of all religious worship—"which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;" which being summarily and typically representative of all divine benefits, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the great motive thereunto. The want of both these in all mere creatures, saints and angels, makes the invocation of them, not only useless, but idolatrous. But they both eminently concur in the person of Christ, and his actings towards us. All the perfections of the divine nature are in him; whence he is the proper object of religious invocation. On this account when he acted in and towards the church as the great angel of the covenant, God instructed the people unto all religious observance of him, and obedience unto him, Exod. xxiii. 21, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." Because the name of God was in him—that is, the divine nature, with sovereign authority to punish or pardon sin—therefore was all religious obedience due unto him. And no motives are wanting hereunto. All that the Lord Christ hath done for us, and all the principles of love,

grace, compassion, and power, from whence what he hath so done did proceed, are all of this nature; and they are accompanied with the encouragement of his relation unto us, and charge concerning us. Take away this duty, and the peculiar advantage of the Christian religion is destroyed.

We have lived to see the utmost extremes that the Christian religion can divert into. Some, with all earnestness, do press the formal invocation of saints and angels as our duty; and some will not grant that it is lawful for us so to call on Christ himself.

The Socinians grant generally that it is lawful for us to call on Christ; but they deny that it is our duty at any time so to do. But as they own that it is not our duty, so on their principles it cannot be lawful. Denying his divine person, they leave him not the proper object of prayer. For prayer without an ascription of divine excellencies—as omniscience, omnipresence, and almighty power—unto him whom we invocate, is but vain babbling, that hath nothing of the nature of true prayer in it; and to make such ascriptions unto him who by nature is not God, is idolatrous.

The solemn ordinary worship of the church, and so of private believers in their families and closets, is under an especial directory and guidance. For the person of the Father—as the eternal fountain of power, grace, and mercy—is the formal object of our prayers, unto whom our supplications are directed. The divine nature, absolutely considered, is the object of natural worship and invocation; but it is the same divine nature, in the person of the Father, that is the proper object of evangelical worship and invocation. So our Saviour hath taught us to call on God under the name and notion of a father, Matt. vi. 9; that is, his God and our God, his Father and our Father, John xx. 17. And this invocation is to be by and in the name of the Son, Jesus Christ, through the aid of the Holy Ghost. He is herein considered as the mediator between God and man—as the Holy Ghost is he by whom supplies of grace, enabling us unto the acceptable performance of our duties, are actually communicated unto us. This is the way whereby God will be glorified. This is the mystery of our religion, that we worship God according to the economy of his wisdom and grace, wherein he doth dispense of himself unto us, in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Otherwise he will not be honoured or worshipped by us. And those who in their worship or invocation do attempt an approach unto the divine nature as absolutely considered, without respect unto the dispensation of God in the distinct persons of the holy Trinity, do reject the mystery of the Gospel, and all the benefits of it. So is it with many. And not a few, who pretend a great devotion unto God, do supply other things into the room of Christ,

as saints and angels—rejecting also the aids of the Spirit to comply with imaginations of their own, whose assistance herein they more approve of.

But this is the nature and method of ordinary solemn evangelical invocation. So it is declared, Eph. ii. 18, "Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." It is the Father unto whom we have our access, whom we peculiarly invocate; as it is expressed, chap. iii. 14–16, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you," &c. But it is through him—that is, by Christ in the exercise of his mediatory office—that we have this access unto the Father; we ask in his name, and for his sake, John xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23, 24. They did so of old, though not in that express exercise of faith which we now attain unto. Dan. ix. 17, "Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for the Lord's sake." All this are we enabled unto by one Spirit—through the aids and assistance of the Spirit of grace and supplication, Rom. viii. 26, 27. So that prayer is our crying—"Abba, Father," by the Spirit of the Son, Gal. iv. 6. This is farther declared, Heb. iv. 15, 16, x. 19–22. Herein is the Lord Christ considered, not absolutely with respect unto his divine person, but with respect unto his office, that through "him our faith and hope might be in God," 1 Peter i. 21.

Wherefore, it being our duty, as hath been proved, to invocate the name of Christ in a particular manner, and this being the ordinary solemn way of the worship of the church—we may consider on what occasions, and in what seasons, this peculiar invocation of Christ, who in his divine person is both our God and our Advocate, is necessary for us, and most acceptable unto him.

(1*st*,) Times of *great distresses in conscience through temptations and desertions*, are seasons requiring an application unto Christ by especial invocation. Persons in such conditions, when their souls, as the Psalmist speaks, are overwhelmed in them, are continually solicitous about compassion and deliverance. Some relief, some refreshment, they often find in pity and compassion from them who either have been in the same condition themselves, or by Scripture light do know the terror of the Lord in these things. When their complaints are despised, and their troubles ascribed unto other causes than what they are really sensible of, and feel within themselves—as is commonly done by physicians of no value—it is an aggravation of their distress and sorrow. And they greatly value every sincere endeavour for relief, either by counsel or prayer. In this state and condition the Lord Christ in the Gospel is proposed as full of tender compassion—as he alone who is able to relieve

them. In that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to have compassion on them that are out of the way, Heb. ii. 18, iv. 15, v. 2. So is he also, as he alone who is able to succour, to relieve, and to deliver them. "He is able to succour them that are tempted," chap. ii. 18. Hereon are they drawn, constrained, encouraged to make applications unto him by prayer, that he would deal with them according to his compassion and power. This is a season rendering the discharge of this duty necessary. And hereby have innumerable souls found consolation, refreshment, and deliverance. A time of trouble is a time of the especial exercise of faith in Christ. So himself gives direction, John xiv. 1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Distinct actings of faith on Christ are the great means of supportment and relief in trouble. And it is by especial invocation, whereby they put forth and exert themselves.

An instance hereof, as unto temptation, and the distress wherewith it is attended, we have in the apostle Paul. He had "a thorn in the flesh," "a messenger of Satan to buffet" him. Both expressions declare the deep sense he had of his temptation, and the perplexity wherewith it was accompanied. "For this cause he besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him," 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. He applied himself solemnly unto prayer for its removal, and that frequently. And it was the Lord—that is, the Lord Jesus Christ—unto whom he made his application. For so the name Lord is to be interpreted—if there be nothing contrary in the context—as the name of God is of the Father, by virtue of that rule, 1 Cor. viii. 6, "To us there is one God, the Father; and one Lord Jesus Christ." And it is evident also in the context. The answer he received unto his prayer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power [strength] is made perfect in weakness." And whose power that was, who gave him that answer, he declares in the next words, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me;" that is, the power of him on whom he called, who gave him that answer, "My power is made perfect in weakness."

(2*dly*,) Times of *gracious discoveries* either of the glory of Christ in *himself*, or of his *love* unto us, are seasons that call for this duty. The glory of Christ in his person and offices is always the same, and the revelation that is made of it in the Scripture varieth not; but—as unto our perception and apprehension of it, whereby our hearts and minds are affected with it in an especial manner—there are apparent seasons of it which no believers are unacquainted withal. Sometimes such a sense of it is attained under the dispensation of the Word; wherein as Christ on the one hand is set forth evidently

crucified before our eyes, so on the other he is gloriously exalted. Sometimes it is so in prayer, in meditation, in contemplation on him. As an ability was given unto the bodily sight of Stephen, to see, upon the opening of the heavens, "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand," Acts vii. 55, 56—so he opens the veil sometimes, and gives a clear, affecting discovery of his glory unto the minds and souls of believers; and in such seasons are they drawn forth and excited unto invocation and praise. So Thomas—being surprised with an apprehension and evidence of his divine glory and power after his resurrection, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. i. 4—cried unto him, "My Lord and my God," John xx. 28. There was in his words both a profession of his own faith and a solemn invocation of Christ. When, therefore, we have real discoveries of the glory of Christ, we cannot but speak to him, or of him. "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," John xii. 41. And Stephen, upon a view of it in the midst of his enraged enemies, testified immediately, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And thereby was he prepared for that solemn invocation of his name which he used presently after, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts vii. 56, 59. And so, also, upon his appearance as the Lamb, to open the book of prophecies; wherein there was an eminent manifestation of his glory—seeing none else could be found in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, that was able to open the book, or so much as to look thereon," Rev. v. 3. "The four and twenty elders fell down before him," and presenting all the prayers of the saints, "sang a new song" of praise unto him, verses 8–10. This is our duty, this will be our wisdom, upon affecting discoveries of the glory of Christ; namely, to apply ourselves unto him by invocation or praise; and thereby will the refreshment and advantage of them abide upon our minds.

So is it also as unto his *love*. The love of Christ is always the same and equal unto the church. Howbeit there are peculiar seasons of the manifestation and application of a sense of it unto the souls of believers. So it is when it is witnessed unto them, or shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Then is it accompanied with a constraining power, to oblige us to live unto him who died for us, and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And of our spiritual life unto Christ, invocation of him is no small portion. And this sense of his love we might enjoy more frequently than for the most part we do, were we not so much wanting unto ourselves and our own concerns. For although it be an act of sovereign grace in God to grant it unto us, and affect us with it, as it seems good unto him, yet is our duty required to dispose our hearts unto its reception.

Were we diligent in casting out all that "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness" which corrupts our affections, and disposes the mind to abound in vain imaginations; were our hearts more taken off from the love of the world, which is exclusive of a sense of divine love; did we more meditate on Christ and his glory;—we should more frequently enjoy these constraining visits of his love than now we do. So himself expresseth it, Rev. iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He makes intimation of his love and kindness unto us. But ofttimes we neither hear his voice when he speaks, nor do open our hearts unto him. So do we lose that gracious, refreshing sense of his love, which he expresseth in that promise, "I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me." No tongue can express that heavenly communion and blessed intercourse which is intimated in this promise. The expression is metaphorical, but the grace expressed is real, and more valued than the whole world by all that have experience of it. This sense of the love of Christ, and the effect of it in communion with him, by prayer and praises, is divinely set forth in the Book of Canticles. The church therein is represented as the spouse of Christ; and, as a faithful spouse, she is always either solicitous about his love, or rejoicing in it. And when she hath attained a sense of it, she aboundeth in invocation, admiration, and praise. So doth the Church of the New Testament, upon an apprehension of his love, and the unspeakable fruits of it: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen," Rev. i. 5, 6. This, therefore, is another season that calls for this duty.

(*3dly,*) *Times of persecution for his Name's sake, and for the profession of the gospel,* are another season rendering this peculiar invocation of Christ both comely and necessary. Two things will befall the minds of believers in such a season;—[*1st,*] that their thoughts will be greatly exercised about him, and conversant with him. They cannot but continually think and meditate on *him* for whom they suffer. None ever suffered persecution on just grounds, with sincere ends, and in a due manner, but it was so with them. The invincible reasons they have to suffer for him—taken from his person, love, grace, and authority—from what he is in himself, what he hath done for them, and what account of all things is to be given unto him—do continually present themselves unto their minds. Wildernesses, prisons, and dungeons, have been filled with thoughts of Christ and his love. And many in former and latter ages have given an account of their communion and holy intercourse with the

Lord Christ under their restraints and sufferings. And those who at any time have made an entrance into such a condition, will all of them give in the testimony of their own experience in this matter. [2*dly*,] Such persons have deep and fixed apprehensions of the especial concernment which the Lord Christ hath in them as unto their present condition—as also of his power to support them, or to work out their deliverance. They know and consider—that "in all their afflictions he is afflicted"—suffers in all their sufferings—is persecuted in all their persecutions; that in them all he is full of love, pity, and unspeakable compassion towards them; that his grace is sufficient for them—that his power shall be perfected in their weakness, to carry them through all their sufferings, unto his and their own glory. In these circumstances, it is impossible for them who are under the conduct of his Spirit, not to make *especial applications* continually unto him for those aids of grace—for those pledges of love and mercy—for those supplies of consolation and spiritual refreshments, which their condition calls for. Wherefore, in this state, the invocation of Christ is the refuge and sheet-anchor of the souls of them who truly believe in him. So it was unto all the holy martyrs of old, and in latter ages.

This doctrine and duty is not for them who are at ease. The afflicted, the tempted, the persecuted, the spiritually disconsolate, will prize it, and be found in the practice of it. And all those holy souls who, in most ages, on the account of the profession of the Gospel, have been reduced unto outwardly unrelievable distresses, have, as was said, left their testimony unto this duty, and the benefits of it. The refreshment which they found therein was a sufficient balance against the weight of all outward calamities, enabling them to rejoice under them with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is the church's reserve against all the trials it may be exercised withal, and all the dangers whereunto it is exposed. Whilst believers have liberty of access unto *him* in their supplications, who hath all power in his hand, who is full of ineffable love and compassion towards them, especially as suffering for his sake—they are more than conquerors in all their tribulations.

(4*thly*,) *When we have a due apprehension of the eminent actings of any grace in Christ Jesus*, and withal a deep and abiding sense of our own want of the same grace, it is a season of especial application unto him by prayer for the increase of it. All graces as unto their habit were equal in Christ—they were all in him in the highest degree of perfection; and every one of them did he exercise in its due manner and measure on all just occasions. But outward causes and circumstances gave *opportunity* unto the exercise of some of them in a way more eminent and conspicuous than others were

exercised in. For instance;—such were his unspeakable condescension, self-denial, and patience in sufferings; which the apostle unto this purpose insists upon, Phil. ii. 5–8. Now the great design of all believers is to be like Jesus Christ, in all grace, and all the exercise of it. He is in all things their pattern and example. Wherefore, when they have a view of the glory of any grace as it was exercised in Christ, and withal a sense of their own defect and want therein—conformity unto him being their design — they cannot but apply themselves unto him in solemn invocation, for a farther communication of that grace unto them, from his stores and fulness. And these things mutually promote one another in us, if duly attended unto. A due sense of our own defect in any grace will farther us in the prospect of the glory of that grace in Christ. And a view, a due contemplation, of the glorious exercise of any grace in him, will give us light to discover our own great defect therein, and want thereof. Under a sense of both, an immediate application unto Christ by prayer would be an unspeakable furtherance of our growth in grace and conformity unto him. Nor can there be any more effectual way or means to draw supplies of grace from him, to draw water from the wells of salvation. When, in a holy admiration of, and fervent love unto, any grace as eminently exercised in and by him, with a sense of our own want of the same grace, we ask it of him in faith—he will not deny it unto us. So the disciples, upon the prescription of a difficult duty, unto whose due performance a good measure of faith was required—out of a sense of the all-fulness of him, and their own defect in that grace which was necessary unto the peculiar duty there prescribed—immediately pray unto him, saying, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5. The same is the case with respect unto any temptation that may befall us, wherewith he was exercised, and over which he prevailed.

(*5thly,*) *The time of death*, whether natural, or violent for his sake, is a season of the same nature. So Stephen recommended his departing soul into his hands with solemn prayer. "Lord Jesus," said he, "receive my spirit." To the same purpose have been the prayers of many of his faithful martyrs in the flames, and under the sword. In the same manner doth the faith of innumerable holy souls work in the midst of their death-bed groans. And the more we have been in the exercise of faith on him in our lives, the more ready will it be in the approaches of death, to make its resort unto him in a peculiar manner.

And it may be other instances of an alike nature may be given unto the same purpose.

An answer unto an inquiry which may possibly arise from what we have insisted on, shall close this discourse. For whereas the

Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, doth intercede with the Father for us, it may be inquired, Whether we may pray unto him, that he would so intercede on our behalf; whether this be comprised in the duty of invocation or prayer unto him?

Ans. 1. There is no precedent nor example of any such thing, of any such prayer, in the Scripture; and it is not safe for us to venture on duties not exemplified therein. Nor can any instance of a necessary duty be given, of whose performance we have not an example in the Scripture. 2. In the invocation of Christ, we "honour the Son, even as we honour the Father." Wherefore his divine person is therein the formal object of our faith. We consider him not therein as acting in his mediatory office towards God for us, but as he who hath the absolute power and disposal of all the good things we pray for. And in our invocation of him, our faith is fixed on, and terminated on his person. But—as he is in the discharge of his mediatory office—through him "our faith and hope are in God," 1 Peter i. 21. He who is the Mediator, or Jesus Christ the Mediator—as God and man in one person—is the object of all divine honour and worship. His person, and both his natures in that person, is so the object of religious worship. This is that which we are in the proof and demonstration of. Howbeit it is his *divine nature*, and not his discharge of the office of mediation, that is the formal reason and object of divine worship. For it consists in an ascription of infinitely divine excellencies and properties unto him whom we so worship. And to do this on any account but of the divine nature, is in itself a contradiction, and in them that do it idolatry. Had the Son of God never been incarnate, he had been the object of all divine worship. And could there have been a mediator between God and us who was not God also, he could never have been the object of any divine worship or invocation. Wherefore Christ the Mediator, God and man in one person, is in all things to be honoured, even as we honour the Father; but it is as he is God, equal with the Father, and not as Mediator—in which respect he is inferior unto him. With respect unto his divine person, we ask immediately of himself in our supplications;—as he is Mediator—we ask of the Father in his name. The different actings of faith on him, under the same distinction, shall be declared in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

The Principle of the Assignation of Divine Honour unto the Person of Christ, in both the Branches of it; which is Faith in Him.

The principle and spring of this assignation of divine honour unto Christ, in both the branches of it, is faith in him. And this hath been the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world since the entrance of sin. There are some who deny that *faith in Christ was required from the beginning,* or was necessary unto the worship of God, or the justification and salvation of them that did obey him. For, whereas it must be granted that "without faith it is impossible to please God," which the apostle proves by instances from the foundation of the world, Heb. xi.—they suppose it is faith in God under the general notion of it, without any respect unto Christ, that is intended. It is not my design to contend with any, nor expressly to confute such ungrateful opinions—such pernicious errors. Such this is, which—being pursued in its proper tendency—strikes at the very foundation of Christian religion; for it at once deprives us of all contribution of light and truth from the Old Testament. Somewhat I have spoken before of the faith of the saints of old concerning him. I shall now, therefore, only confirm the truth, by some principles which are fundamental in the faith of the Gospel.

1. The first promise, Gen. iii. 15—truly called Πρωτευαγγέλιον—was revealed, proposed, and given, as containing and expressing the only means of delivery from that apostasy from God, with all the effects of it, under which our first parents and all their posterity were cast by sin. The destruction of Satan and his work in his introduction of the state of sin, by a Saviour and Deliverer, was prepared and provided for in it. This is the very foundation of the faith of the church; and if it be denied, nothing of the economy or dispensation of God towards it from the beginning can be understood. The whole doctrine and story of the Old Testament must be rejected as useless, and no foundation be left in the truth of God for the introduction of the New.

2. It was *the person of Christ,* his incarnation and mediation, that were promised under the name of the "seed of the woman," and the work he should do in breaking the head of the serpent, with the way whereby he should do it in suffering, by his power. The accomplishment hereof was in God's sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the fulness of time, made under the law, or by his manifestation in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil. So is

this promise interpreted, Gal. iii. 13, iv. 4; Heb. ii. 14–16; 1 John iii. 8. This cannot be denied but upon one of these two grounds:—

(1.) That nothing is intended in that divine revelation but only *a natural enmity* that is between mankind and serpents. But this is so foolish an imagination, that the Jews themselves, who constantly refer this place to the Messiah, are not guilty of. All the whole truth concerning God's displeasure on the sin of our first parents, with what concerneth the nature and consequence of that sin, is everted hereby. And whereas the foundation of all God's future dealing with them and their posterity is plainly expressed herein, it is turned into that which is ludicrous, and of very little concernment in human life. For such is the enmity between mankind and serpents—which not one in a million knows any thing of, or is troubled with. This is but to lay the axe of atheism unto all religion built on divine revelation. Besides, on this supposition, there is in the words not the least intimation of any relief that God tendered unto our parents for their delivery from the state and condition whereinto they had cast themselves by their sin and apostasy. Wherefore they must be esteemed to be left absolutely under the curse, as the angels were that fell—which is to root all religion out of the world. For amongst them who are absolutely under the curse, without any remedy, there can be no more than is in hell. Or—

(2.) It must be, because *some other way of deliverance* and salvation, and not that by Christ, is here proposed and promised. But, whereas they were to be wrought by the "seed of the woman"—if this were not that Christ in whom we do believe, there was another promised, and he is to be rejected. And this is fairly at once to blot out the whole Scripture as a fable; for there is not a line of doctrinal truth in it but what depends on the traduction of Christ from this first promise.

3. This promise was *confirmed*, and the way of the deliverance of the church by virtue of it declared, in the institution of expiatory sacrifices. God in them and by them declared from the beginning, that "without shedding of blood there was no remission;" that atonement for sin was to be made by substitution and satisfaction. With respect unto them, the Lord Christ was called "The Lamb of God," even as he took away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of himself, John i. 29. For we "were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 19. Wherein the Holy Spirit refers unto the institution and nature of sacrifices from the beginning. And he is thence represented in heaven as a "Lamb that had been slain," Rev. v. 6—the glory of heaven arising from the fruits and effects of his sacrifice. And

because of the representation thereof in all the former sacrifices, is he said to be a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. And it is strange to me that any who deny not the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, should doubt whether the original of these sacrifices were of divine institution or the invention of men. And it is so, amongst others, for the reasons ensuing:—

(1.) On the supposition that they were of men's finding out and voluntary observation, without any previous divine revelation, it must be granted that the foundation of all acceptable religion in the world was laid in, and resolved into, the wisdom and wills of men, and not into the wisdom, authority, and will of God. For that the great solemnity of religion, which was as the centre and testimony of all its other duties, did consist in these sacrifices even before the giving of the law, will not be denied. And in the giving of the law, God did not, on this supposition, confirm and establish his own institutions with additions unto them of the same kind, but set his seal and approbation unto the inventions of men. But this is contrary unto natural light, and the whole current of Scripture revelations.

(2.) All expiatory sacrifices were, from the beginning, types and representations of the sacrifice of Christ; whereon all their use, efficacy, and benefit among men—all their acceptance with God—did depend. Remove this consideration from them, and they were as irrational a service, as unbecoming the divine nature, as any thing that reasonable creatures could fix upon. They are to this day as reasonable a service as ever they were, but that only their respect unto the sacrifice of Christ is taken from them. And what person of any ordinary understanding could now suppose them a meet service whereby to glorify the divine nature? Besides, all expiatory sacrifices were of the same nature, and of the same use, both before and after the giving of the law. But that all those afterward were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, the apostle demonstrates at large in his Epistle unto the Hebrews. The inquiry, therefore, is, whether this blessed prefiguration of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, as he was the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, was an effect of the wisdom, goodness, and will of God, or of the wills and inventions of men. And let it be considered, also, that these men, who are supposed to be the authors of this wonderful representation of the Lord Christ and his sacrifice, did indeed know little of them—or, as the assertors of this opinion imagine, nothing at all. To suppose that those who knew no more of Christ than they could learn from the first promise—which, as some think, was nothing at all—should of their own heads find out and appoint this divine service, which consisted only in the prefiguration of him and his sacrifice; and that God should not only approve of it, but allow it as the principal means for the establish-

ment and exercise of the faith of all believers for four thousand years; is to indulge unto thoughts deviating from all rules of sobriety. He that sees not a divine wisdom in this institution, hath scarce seriously exercised his thoughts about it. But I have elsewhere considered the causes and original of these sacrifices, and shall not therefore farther insist upon them.

4. Our first parents and all their holy posterity *did believe this promise*, or did embrace it as the only way and means of their deliverance from the curse and state of sin; and were thereon justified before God. I confess we have not infallible assurance of any who did so in particular, but those who are mentioned by name in Scripture, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and some others; but to question it concerning others also, as of our first parents themselves, is foolish and impious. This is done by the Socinians to promote another design, namely, that none were justified before God on the belief of the first promise, but on their walking according to the light of nature, and their obedience unto some especial revelations about temporal things—the vanity whereof hath been before discovered. Wherefore, our first parents and their posterity did so believe the first promise, or they must be supposed either to have been kept under the curse, or else to have had, and to make use of, some other way of deliverance from it. To imagine the first is impious—for the apostle affirms that they had this testimony, that they pleased God, Heb. xi. 5; which under the curse none can do—for that is God's displeasure. And in the same place he confirms their faith, and justification thereon, with a "cloud of witnesses," chap. xii. 1. To affirm the latter is groundless; and it includes a supposal of the relinquishment of the wisdom, grace, and authority of God in that divine revelation, for men to betake themselves to none knows what. For that there was in this promise the way expressed which God in his wisdom and grace had provided for their deliverance, we have proved before. To forsake this way, and to betake themselves unto any other, whereof he had made no mention or revelation unto them, was to reject his authority and grace.

As for those who are otherwise minded, it is incumbent on them directly to prove these three things:—

(1.) That there is another way—that there are other means for the justification and salvation of sinners—than that revealed, declared, and proposed in that first promise. And when this is done, they must show to what end—on that supposition—the promise itself was given, seeing the end of it is evacuated.

(2.) That upon a supposition that God had revealed in the promise the way and means of our deliverance from the curse and state of sin, it was lawful unto men to forsake it, and to betake themselves

unto another way, without any supernatural revelation for their guidance. For if it was not, their relinquishment of the promise was no less apostasy from God in the revelation of himself in a way of grace, than the first sin was as to the revelation of himself in the works of nature: only, the one revelation was by inbred principles, the other by external declaration; nor could it otherwise be. Or,—

(3.) That there was some other way of the participation of the benefits of this promise, besides faith in it, or in him who was promised therein; seeing the apostle hath declared that no promise will profit them by whom it is not mixed with faith, Heb. iv. 2. Unless these things are plainly proved—which they will never be—whatever men declaim about universal objective grace in the documents of nature, it is but a vain imagination.

5. The declaration of this promise, before the giving of the law, with the nature and ends of it, as also the use of sacrifices, whereby it was confirmed, *was committed unto the ordinary ministry of our first parents* and their godly posterity, and the extraordinary ministry of the prophets which God raised up among them. For God spake of our redemption by Christ by the mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world, Luke i. 70. No greater duty could be incumbent on them, by the light of nature and the express revelation of the will of God, than that they should, in their several capacities, communicate the knowledge of this promise unto all in whom they were concerned. To suppose that our first parents, who received this promise, and those unto whom they first declared it, looking on it as the only foundation of their acceptance with God and deliverance from the curse, were negligent in the declaration and preaching of it, is to render them brutish, and guilty of a second apostasy from God. And unto this principle—which is founded in the light of nature—there is countenance given by revelation also. For Enoch did prophesy of the things which were to accompany the accomplishment of this promise, Jude 14; and Noah was a preacher of the righteousness to be brought in by it, 2 Peter ii. 5—as he was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, in himself, Heb. xi. 7.

6. *All the promises* that God gave afterward unto the church under the Old Testament, before and after giving the law—all the covenants that he entered into with particular persons, or the whole congregation of believers—were all of them declarations and *confirmations of this first promise*, or the way of salvation by the mediation of his Son, becoming the seed of the woman, to break the head of the serpent, and to work out the deliverance of mankind. As most of these promises were expressly concerning him, so all of them in the counsel of God were confirmed in him, 2 Cor. i. 20. And as there are depths in the Scripture of the Old Testament concerning

him which we cannot fathom, and things innumerable spoken of him or in his person which we conceive not, so the principal design of the whole is the declaration of him and his grace. And it is unprofitable unto them who are otherwise minded. Sundry promises concerning temporal things were, on various occasions, superadded unto this great spiritual promise of life and grace. And the enemies of the person and mediation of Christ do contend that men are justified by their faith and obedience with respect unto those particular revelations, which were only concerning temporal things. But to suppose that all those revelations and promises were not built upon and resolved into, did not include in them, the grace and mercy of this first promise—is to make them curses instead of blessings, and deprivations of that grace which was infinitely better than what, on this supposition, was contained in them. The truth is, they were all additions unto it, and confirmations of it; nor had any thing of spiritual good in them, but upon a supposition of it. In some of them there was an ampliation of grace in the more full declaration of the nature of this promise, as well as an application unto their persons unto whom they were made. Such was the promise made unto Abraham, which had a direct respect unto Christ, as the apostle proveth, Gal. iii. and iv.

7. Those who voluntarily, through the contempt of God and divine grace, fell off from the knowledge and faith of this promise, whether at once and by choice, or gradually through the love of sin, were in no better condition than those have been, or would be, who have so fallen off or should so apostatize from Christian religion after its revelation and profession. And although this proved, in process of time, both before and after the flood, to be the condition of the generality of mankind, yet is it in vain to seek after the means of salvation among them who had voluntarily rejected the only way which God had revealed and provided for that end. God thereon "suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," Acts xiv. 16—"winking at the times of their ignorance"—not calling them to repentance, chap. xvii. 30; yea, he "gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels," Ps. lxxxi. 12. And nothing can be more derogatory unto the wisdom and holiness of God, than to imagine that he would grant other ways of salvation unto them who had rejected that only one which he had provided; which was by faith in Christ, as revealed in that first promise.

8. From these considerations, which are all of them unquestionable principles of truth, two things are evident.

(1.) That there was no way of the justification and salvation of sinners revealed and proposed from the foundation of the world, but only by Jesus Christ, as declared in the first promise.

(2.) That there was no way for the participation of the benefits of that promise, or of his work of mediation, but by faith in him as so promised. There was, therefore, faith in him required from the foundation of the world; that is, from the entrance of sin. And how this faith respected his person hath been before declared. Now, faith in him as promised for the works and ends of his mediation, and faith in him as actually exhibited and as having accomplished his work, are essentially the same, and differ only with respect unto the economy of times, which God disposed at his pleasure. Hence the efficacy of his mediation was the same unto them who then so believed, as it is now unto us after his actual exhibition in the flesh.

But yet it is acknowledged, that—as unto the clearness and fulness of the revelation of the mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in him—as unto the constitution of his person in his incarnation, and therein the determination of the individual person promised from the beginning, through the actual accomplishment of the work which he was promised for—faith in him, as the foundation of that divine honour which it is our duty to give unto him, is far more evidently and manifestly revealed and required in the Gospel, or under the New Testament, than it was under the Old. See Eph. iii. 8–11. The respect of faith now unto Christ is that which renders it truly evangelical. To believe in him, to believe on his name, is that signal especial duty which is now required of us.

Wherefore the ground of the actual assignation of divine honour unto the person of Christ, in both branches of it, adoration and invocation, is faith in him. So he said unto the blind man whose eyes he opened, "Believest thou on the Son of God?" John ix. 35. And he said, "Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him," verse 38. All divine worship or adoration is a consequent effect and fruit of faith. So also is invocation; for "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Rom. x. 14. Him in whom we believe, we ought to adore and invocate. For these are the principal ways whereby divine faith doth act itself. And so to adore or invocate any in whom we ought not to believe, is idolatry.

This faith, therefore, on the person of Christ is our duty; yea, such a duty it is, as that our eternal condition doth more peculiarly depend on the performance or nonperformance of it than on any other duty whatever. For constantly under those terms is it prescribed unto us. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 36. Wherefore the nature and exercise of this faith must be inquired into.

There is a faith which is exercised towards those by whom the

mind and will of God is revealed. So it is said of the Israelites, "They believed the Lord and Moses," Exod. xiv. 31; that is, that he was sent of God, was no deceiver—that it was the word and will of God which he revealed unto them. So 2 Chron. xx. 20, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." It was not the persons of the prophets, but their message, that was the object of the faith required. It was to believe what they said, as from God—not to believe in them as if they were God. So it is explained by the apostle, Acts xxvi. 27, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." He believed that they were sent of God, and that the word they spake was from him; otherwise there was no believing of them who were dead so many ages before.

And this is all the faith in Christ himself which some will allow. To believe in Christ, they say, is only to believe the doctrine of the Gospel revealed by him. Hence they deny that any could believe in him before his coming into the world, and the declaration of the mind of God in the Gospel made by him. An assent unto the truth of the Gospel, as revealed by Christ, is with them the whole of that faith in Christ Jesus which is required of us.

Of all that poison which at this day is diffused in the minds of men, corrupting them from the mystery of the Gospel, there is no part that is more pernicious than this one perverse imagination, that to believe in Christ is nothing at all but to believe the doctrine of the Gospel; which yet, we grant, is included therein. For as it allows the consideration of no office in him but that of a prophet, and that not as vested and exercised in his divine person, so it utterly overthrows the whole foundation of the relation of the church unto him, and salvation by him.

That which suits my present design, is to evince that it is the person of Christ which is the first and principal object of that faith wherewith we are required to believe in him; and that so to do, is not only to assent unto the truth of the doctrine revealed by him, but also to place our trust and confidence in him for mercy, relief, and protection—for righteousness, life, and salvation—for a blessed resurrection and eternal reward. This I shall first manifest from some few of those multiplied testimonies wherein this truth is declared, and whereby it is confirmed, as also with some arguments taken from them; and then proceed to declare the ground, nature, and exercise of this faith itself.

As unto the testimonies confirming this truth, it must be observed of them all in general, that wherever faith is required towards our Lord Jesus Christ, it is still called believing "in him," or "on his name," according as faith in God absolutely is every where expressed.

If no more be intended but only the belief of the doctrine revealed by him, then whose doctrine soever we are obliged to believe, we may be rightly said to believe in them, or to believe on their name. For instance, we are obliged to believe the doctrine of Paul the apostle, the revelations made by him, and that on the hazard of our eternal welfare by the unbelieving of them; yet that we should be said to *believe in Paul*, is that which he did utterly detest, 1 Cor. i. 13, 15.

For the places themselves the reader may consult, among others, John i. 12, iii. 16, 18, 36, vi. 29, 35, 41, vii. 38, 39; Acts xiv. 23, xvi. 31, xix. 4, xxiv. 24, xxvi. 18; Rom. iii. 26, ix. 33, x. 11; 1 Peter ii. 6; 1 John v. 10, 13. There is not one of these but sufficiently confirms the truth. Some few others not named may be briefly insisted on.

John xiv. 1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The distinction made between God and him limits the name of God unto the person of the Father. Faith is required in them both, and that distinctly: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And it is the same faith, of the same kind, to be exercised in the same way and manner, that is required; as is plain in the words. They will not admit of a double faith, of one faith in God, and of another in Christ, or of a distinct way of their exercise.

Wherefore, as faith divine is fixed on, and terminated in, the person of the Father; so is it likewise distinctly in and on the person of the Son: and it was to evidence his divine nature unto them—which is the ground and reason of their faith—that he gave his command unto his disciples. This he farther testifies, verses 9–11. And as unto the exercise of this faith, it respected the relief of their souls, under troubles, fears, and disconsolations: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." To believe in him unto the relief of our souls against troubles, is not to assent merely unto the doctrine of the Gospel, but also to place our trust and confidence in him, for such supplies of grace, for such an exercise of the acts of divine power, as whereby we may be supported and delivered. And we have herein the whole of what we plead. Divine faith acted distinctly in, and terminated on, the person of Christ—and that with respect unto supplies of grace and mercy from him in a way of divine power.

So he speaks unto Martha, John xi. 25–27, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" Whereunto she answers, "Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." His person was the object of her faith; and her belief in him comprised a trust for all spiritual and eternal mercies.

I shall add one more, wherein not only the thing itself, but the especial ground and reason of it, is declared, Gal. ii. 20—"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That faith he asserts which is the cause of our spiritual life—that life unto God which we lead in the flesh, or whilst we are in the body, not yet admitted unto sight and enjoyment. Of this faith the Son of God is both the author and the object; the latter whereof is here principally intended. And this is evident from the reason and motive of it, which are expressed. This faith I live by, am in the continual exercise of, because he "loved me, and gave himself for me." For this is that which doth powerfully influence our hearts to fix our faith in him and on him. And that person who so loved us is the same in whom we do believe. If his person was the seat of his own love, it is the object of our faith. And this faith is not only our duty, but our life. He that hath it not, is dead in the sight of God.

But I hope it is not yet necessary to multiply testimonies to prove it our duty to believe in Jesus Christ—that is, to believe in the person of the Son of God, for other faith in Christ there is none; yet I shall add one or two considerations in the confirmation of it.

1*st*, There is no more necessary hereunto—namely, to prove the person of Christ the Son of God to be the proper and distinct object of faith divine—than what we have already demonstrated concerning the solemn invocation of him. For, saith the apostle, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Rom. x. 14. It holds on either side. We cannot, we ought not, to call on him in whom we do not, we ought not to believe. And in whom we do believe, on him we ought to call. Wherefore, if it be our duty to call on the name of Christ, it is our duty to believe in the person of Christ. And if to believe in Christ be no more but to believe the doctrine of the Gospel which he hath revealed, then every one whose doctrine we are obliged to believe, on them we ought to call also. And on this ground, we may call on the names of the prophets and apostles, as well as on the name of Jesus Christ, and be saved thereby. But whereas invocation or prayer proceedeth from faith, and that prayer is for mercy, grace, life, and eternal salvation; faith must be fixed on the person so called on, as able to give them all unto us, or that prayer is in vain.

2*dly*, Again, that we are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and that distinctly with the Father, is a sufficient evidence of the necessity of faith in his person; for we are therein given up unto universal spiritual subjection of soul unto him, and dependence on him. Not to believe in him, on his name—that is, his person—when we are so given up unto him; or baptized into him, is virtually to

renounce him. But to put a present close unto this contest: Faith in Christ is that grace whereby the church is united unto him—incorporated into one mystical body with him. It is thereby that he dwells in them, and they in him. By this alone are all supplies of grace derived from him unto the whole body. Deny his person to be the proper and immediate object of this faith, and all these things are utterly overthrown—that is, the whole spiritual life and eternal salvation of the church.

This faith in the person of Christ, which is the foundation of all that divine honour in sacred adoration and invocation which is assigned unto him, may be considered two ways. *First*, As it respects his person absolutely; *Secondly*, As he is considered in the discharge of the office of mediation.

First, In the first sense, faith is placed absolutely and ultimately on the person of Christ, even as on the person of the Father. He counts it no robbery herein to be equal with the Father. And the reason hereof is, because the divine nature itself is the proper and immediate object of this faith, and all the acts of it. This being one and the same in the person of the Father and of the Son, as also of the Holy Spirit, two things do follow thereon. 1. That each person is equally the object of our faith, because equally participant of that nature which is the formal reason and object of it. 2. It follows also, that in acting faith on, and ascribing therewithal divine honour unto, any one person, the others are not excluded; yea, they are included therein. For by reason of the mutual inbeing of the Divine persons in the unity of the same nature, the object of all spiritual worship is undivided. Hence are those expressions of the Scriptures, "He that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father; he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father, for he and the Father are one."

And to clear our present design, three things may be observed from hence; namely, that the divine nature, with all its essential properties, is the formal reason and only ground of divine faith. As—

1*st*, That the Lord Christ is not the *absolute and ultimate* object of our faith, any otherwise but under this consideration, of his being partaker of the nature of God—of his being in the form of God, and equal unto him. Without this, to place our faith in him would be robbery and sacrilege; as is all the pretended faith of them who believe not his divine person.

2*dly*, There is no derogation from the honour and glory of the Father—not the least diversion of any one signal act of duty from him, nor from the Holy Spirit—by the especial actings of faith on the person of Christ; for all divine honour is given solely unto the

divine nature: and this being absolutely the same in each person, in the honouring of one, they are all equally honoured. He that honoureth the Son, he therein honoureth the Father also.

3*dly*, Hence it appears what is that especial acting of faith on the person of Christ which we intend, and which in the Scripture is given in charge unto us, as indispensably necessary unto our salvation. And there are three things to be considered in it.

(1*st*,) That his divine nature is the proper formal object of this faith, on the consideration whereof alone it is fixed on him. If you ask a reason why I believe on the Son of God—if you intend what cause I have for it, what motives unto it—I shall answer, It is because of what he hath done for me, whereof afterward. So doth the apostle, Gal. ii. 20. But if you intend, what is the formal reason, ground, and warranty whereon I thus believe in him, or place my trust and confidence in him, I say it is only this, that he is "over all, God blessed for ever;" and were he not so, I could not believe in him. For to believe in any, is to expect from him that to be done for me which none but God can do.

(2*dly*,) That the entire person of Christ, as God and man, is the immediate object of our faith herein. The divine nature is the reason of it; but his divine person is the object of it. In placing our faith on him, we consider him as God and man in one and the same person. We believe in him because he is God; but we believe in him as he is God and man in one person.

And this consideration of the person of Christ—namely, as he is God and man—in our acting of faith on him, is that which renders it peculiar, and limits or determines it unto his person, because he only is so;—the Father is not, nor the Holy Spirit. That faith which hath the person of God and man for its object, is peculiarly and distinctly placed on Christ.

(3*dly*,) The motives unto this distinct acting of faith on his person are always to be considered as those also which render this faith peculiar. For the things which Christ hath done for us, which are the motives of our faith in him, were peculiar unto him alone; as in the place before quoted, Gal. ii. 20. Such are all the works of his mediation, with all the fruits of them, whereof we are made partakers. So God, in the first command, wherein he requires all faith, love, and obedience from the church, enforced it with the consideration of a signal benefit which it had received, and therein a type of all spiritual and eternal mercies, Exod. xx. 2, 3. Hence two things are evident, which clearly state this matter.

[1*st*,] That faith which we place upon and the honour which we give thereby unto the person of Christ, is equally placed on and honour equally given thereby unto the other persons of the Father

and the Holy Spirit, with respect unto that nature which is the formal reason and cause of it. But it is peculiarly fixed on Christ, with respect unto his person as God and man, and the motives unto it, in the acts and benefits of his mediation.

[2*dly*,] *All of Christ* is considered and glorified in this acting of faith on him;—his *divine nature*, as the formal cause of it; his *divine entire person, God and man*, as its proper object; and the *benefits of his mediation*, as the especial motives thereunto.

This faith in the person of Christ is the spring and fountain of our spiritual life. We live by the faith of the Son of God. In and by the actings hereof is it preserved, increased, and strengthened. "For he is our life," Col. iii. 4; and all supplies of it are derived from him, by the actings of faith in him. We receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, "by the faith that is in him," Acts xxvi. 18. Hereby do we abide in him; without which we can do nothing, John xv. 5. Hereby is our peace with God maintained—"For he is our peace," Eph. ii. 14; and in him we have peace, according to his promise, John xvi. 33. All strength for the mortification of sin, for the conquest of temptations—all our increase and growth in grace—depend on the constant actings of this faith in him.

The way and method of this faith is that which we have described. A due apprehension of the love of Christ, with the effects of it in his whole mediatory work on our behalf—especially in his giving himself for us, and our redemption by his blood—is the great motive thereunto. They whose hearts are not deeply affected herewith, can never believe in him in a due manner. "I live," saith the apostle, "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Unless a sense hereof be firmly implanted in our souls, unless we are deeply affected with it, our faith in him would be weak and wavering, or rather none at all. The due remembrance of what the blessed Lord Jesus hath done for us, of the ineffable love which was the spring, cause, and fountain of what he so did—thoughts of the mercy, grace, peace, and glory which he hath procured thereby—are the great and unconquerable motives to fix our faith, hope, trust, and confidence in him.

His divine nature is the ground and warranty for our so doing. This is that from whence he is the due and proper object of all divine faith and worship. From the power and virtue thereof do we expect and receive all those things which in our believing on him we seek after; for none but God can bestow them on us, or work them in us. There is in all the actings of our faith on him, the voice of the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

His divine person, wherein he is God and man, wherein he hath

that nature which is the formal object of divine worship, and wherein he wrought all those things which are the motives thereunto, is the object of this faith; which gives its difference and distinction from faith in God in general, and faith in the person of the Father, as the fountain of grace, love, and power.

Secondly, Faith is acted on Christ under the formal notion of *mediator between God and man.* So it is expressed, 1 Peter i. 21, "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." And this acting of faith towards Christ is not contrary unto that before described, nor inconsistent with it, though it be distinct from it. To deny the person of Christ to fall under this double consideration—of a divine person absolutely, wherein he is "over all, God blessed for ever," and, as manifested in the flesh, exercising the office of mediator between God and man—is to renounce the Gospel. And according unto the variety of these respects, so are the actings of faith various; some on him absolutely, on the motives of his mediation; some on him as mediator only. And how necessary this variety is unto the life, supportment, and comfort of believers, they all know in some measure who are so. See our exposition on Heb. i. 1–3. Sometimes faith considers him as on the throne; sometimes as standing at the right hand of God; sometimes as the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Sometimes his glorious power, sometimes his infinite condescension, is their relief.

Wherefore, in the sense now intended, he is considered as the ordinance, as the servant of God, "who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory." So our faith respects not only his person, but all the acts of his office. It is faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. It is the will of God, that we should place our faith and trust in him and them, as the only means of our acceptance with him—of all grace and glory from him. This is the proper notion of a mediator. So is he not the ultimate object of our faith, wherein it rests, but God through him. "Through him have we access by one Spirit unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18. So he is the way whereby we go to God, John xiv. 6; see Heb. x. 19–22. And this also is faith in him; because he is the immediate, though not the ultimate, object of it, Acts xxvi. 18.

This is that which renders our faith in God evangelical. The especial nature of it ariseth from our respect unto God in Christ, and through him. And herein faith principally regards Christ in the discharge of his sacerdotal office. For although it is also the principle of all obedience unto him in his other offices, yet as unto fixing our faith in God through him, it is his sacerdotal office and the effects of it that we rest upon and trust unto. It is through

him as the high priest over the house of God, as he who hath made for us a new and living way into the holy place, that we draw nigh to God, Heb. iv. 14–16, x. 19–22; 1 John i. 3.

No comfortable, refreshing thoughts of God, no warrantable or acceptable boldness in an approach and access unto him, can any one entertain or receive, but in this exercise of faith on Christ as the mediator between God and man. And if, in the practice of religion, this regard of faith unto him—this acting of faith on God through him—be not the principle whereby the whole is animated and guided, Christianity is renounced, and the vain cloud of natural religion embraced in the room of it. Not a verbal mention of him, but the real intention of heart to come unto God by him, is required of us; and thereinto all expectation of acceptance with God, as unto our persons or duties, is resolved.

We have had great endeavours of late, by the Socinians, to set forth and adorn a natural religion; as if it were sufficient unto all ends of our living unto God. But as most of its pretended ornaments are stolen from the Gospel, or are framed in an emanation of light from it, such as nature of itself could not rise unto; so the whole proceeds from a dislike of the mediation of Christ, and even weariness of the profession of faith in him. So is it with the minds of men who were never affected with supernatural revelations, with the mystery of the Gospel, beyond the owning of some notions of truth—who never had experience of its power in the life of God.

But here lies the trial of faith truly evangelical. Its steady beholding of the Sun of Righteousness proves it genuine and from above. And let them take heed who find their heart remiss or cold in this exercise of it. When men begin to satisfy themselves with general hopes of mercy in God, without a continual respect unto the interposition and mediation of Christ, whereinto their hope and trust is resolved, there is a decay in their faith, and proportionably in all other evangelical graces also. Herein lies the mystery of Christian religion, which the world seems to be almost weary of.

CHAPTER XI.

Obedience unto Christ—The Nature and Causes of it.

II. All holy obedience, both internal and external, is that which we proposed as the second part of our religious regard unto the person of Christ. His great injunction unto his disciples is, "That they keep his commandments"—without which, none are so.

Some say the Lord Christ is to be considered as a lawgiver, and the Gospel as a new law given by him, whereby our obedience unto him is to be regulated. Some absolutely deny it, and will not grant the Gospel in any sense to be a new law. And many dispute about these things, whilst obedience itself is on all hands generally neglected. But this is that wherein our principal concernment doth lie. I shall not, therefore, at present, immix myself in any needless disputations. Those things wherein the nature and necessity of our obedience unto him is concerned, shall be briefly declared.

The law under the Old Testament, taken generally, had two parts,—*first*, the *moral preceptive part* of it; and, *secondly*, the *institutions of worship* appointed for that season. These are jointly and distinctly called the law.

In respect unto the *first* of these, the Lord Christ gave no new law, nor was the old abrogated by him—which it must be if another were given in the room of it, unto the same ends. For the introduction of a new law in the place of and unto the end of a former, is an actual abrogation of it. Neither did he add any new precepts unto it, nor give any counsels for the performance of duties in matter or manner beyond what it prescribed. Any such supposition is contrary to the wisdom and holiness of God in giving the law, and inconsistent with the nature of the law itself. For God never required less of us in the law than all that was due unto him; and his prescription of it included all circumstances and causes that might render any duty at any time necessary in the nature or degrees of it. Whatever at any time may become the duty of any person towards God, in the substance or degrees of it, it is made so by the law. All is included in that summary of it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Nothing can be the duty of men but what and when it is required by the love of God or our neighbour. Wherefore, no additions were made unto the preceptive part of the law by our Saviour, nor counsels given by him for the performance of more than it did require.

In this regard the Gospel is no new law;—only the duties of the moral and eternal law are plainly declared in the doctrine of it, enforced in its motives, and directed as to their manner and end. Nor in this sense did the Lord Christ ever declare himself to be a new lawgiver; yea, he declares the contrary—that he came to confirm the old, Matt. v. 17.

Secondly, The law may be considered as containing the *institutions of worship* which were given in Horeb by Moses, with other statutes and judgments. It was in this sense abolished by Christ. For the things themselves were appointed but unto the time of reformation. And thereon, as the supreme Lord and lawgiver of the Gospel

Church, he gave a new law of worship, consisting in several institutions and ordinances of worship thereunto belonging. See Heb. iii. 3–6, and our exposition of that place.

Obedience unto the Lord Christ may be considered with respect unto both these;—the *moral law* which he confirmed, and the *law of evangelical worship* which he gave and appointed. And some few things may be added to clear the nature of it.

1. Obedience unto Christ doth not consist merely in doing the things which he requireth. So far the church under the Old Testament was obliged to yield obedience unto Moses; and we are yet so unto the prophets and apostles. This is done, or may be so, with respect unto any subordinate directive cause of our obedience, when it is not formally so denominated from his authority. All obedience unto Christ proceeds from an express subjection of our souls and consciences unto him.

2. No religious obedience could be due unto the Lord Christ directly, by the rule and command of the moral law, were he not God by nature also. The reason and foundation of all the obedience required therein is, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me." This contains the formal reason of all religious obedience. The Socinians pretend highly unto obedience to the precepts of Christ; but all obedience unto Christ himself they utterly overthrow. The obedience they pretend unto him, is but obeying God the Father according to his commands; but they take away the foundation of all obedience unto his person, by denying his divine nature. And all religious obedience unto any who is not God by nature, is idolatry. Wherefore, all obedience unto God, due by the moral law, hath respect unto the person of Christ, as one God with the Father and Holy Spirit, blessed for ever.

3. There is a peculiar respect unto him in all moral obedience as Mediator.

(1.) In that, by the supreme authority over the church wherewith he was vested, he hath confirmed all the commands of the moral law, giving them new enforcements; whence he calls them his commands. "This," saith he, "is my commandment, That ye love one another;" which yet was the old commandment of the moral law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Hence the apostle calls it an old and new commandment, 1 John ii. 7, 8.

This law was given unto the church under the Old Testament in the hand of a mediator; that is, of Moses, Gal. iii. 19. It had an original power of obliging all mankind unto obedience, from its first institution or prescription in our creation; which it never lost nor abated in. Howbeit the church was obliged to have a respect unto it, as it was given unto them, "ordained by angels in the hand of a

mediator." See Mal. iv. 4. Hereon many things hard and difficult did ensue, which we are now freed from. We are not obliged unto the observance of the moral law itself, as given in the hand of that mediator, which gave it the formal reason of a covenant unto that people, and had other statutes and judgments inseparable from it. But the same law continueth still in its original authority and power, which it had from the beginning, to oblige all indispensably unto obedience.

Howbeit, as the Church of Israel, as such, was not obliged unto obedience unto the moral law absolutely considered, but as it was given unto them peculiarly in the hand of a mediator—that is, of Moses; no more is the Evangelical Church, as such, obliged by the original authority of that law, but as it is confirmed unto us in the hand of our Mediator. This renders all our moral obedience evangelical. For there is no duty of it, but we are obliged to perform it in faith through Christ, on the motives of the love of God in him, of the benefits of his mediation, and the grace we receive by him: whatever is otherwise done by us is not acceptable unto God.

They do, therefore, for the most part, but deceive themselves and others, who talk so loudly about moral duties. I know of none that are acceptable unto God, which are not only materially, but formally so, and no more.

If the obligation they own unto them be only the original power of the moral law, or the law of our creation, and they are performed in the strength of that law unto the end of it, they are no way accepted of God. But if they intend the duties which the moral law requireth, proceeding from, and performed by, faith in Christ, upon the grounds of the love of God in him, and grace received from him—then are they duties purely evangelical. And although the law hath never lost, nor ever can lose, its original power of obliging us unto universal obedience, as we are reasonable creatures; yet is our obedience unto it as Christians, as believers, immediately influenced by its confirmation unto the Evangelical Church in the hand of our Mediator. For—

(2.) God hath given unto the Lord Christ all power in his name, to require this obedience from all that receive the Gospel. Others are left under the original authority of the Law, either as implanted in our natures at their first creation, as are the Gentiles; or as delivered by Moses, and written in tables of stone, as it was with the Jews, Rom. ii. 12–15. But as unto them that are called unto the faith of the Gospel, the authority of Christ doth immediately affect their minds and consciences. "He feeds" or rules his people "in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God," Micah v. 4. All the authority and majesty of God is in him

and with him;—so of old, as the great Angel of God's presence, he was in the church in the wilderness with a delegated power, Exod. xxiii. 20–22: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared: beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak," &c. The name of God the Father is so in him—that is, he is so partaker of the same nature with him—that his voice is the voice of the Father: "If thou obey his voice, and do all that I speak." Nevertheless, he acts herein as the Angel of God, with power and authority delegated from him. So is he still immediately present with the church, requiring obedience in the name and majesty of God.

(3.) All judgment upon and concerning this obedience is committed unto him by the Father: "For the Father judgeth no man," (that is, immediately as the Father,) "but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22; He "hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man," verse 27. And his judgment is the judgment of God; for the Father, who judgeth none immediately in his own person, judgeth all in him, 1 Peter i. 17: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work." He doth so in and by the Son, unto whom all judgment is committed. And unto him are we to have regard in all our obedience, unto whom we must give our account concerning it, and by whom we are and must be finally judged upon it. To this purpose speaks the apostle, Rom. xiv. 10–12, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." He proveth that we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, or be judged by him, by a testimony of Scripture that we shall be also judged by God himself, and give an account of ourselves unto him. And as this doth undeniably prove and confirm the divine nature of Christ, without the faith whereof there is neither cogency in the apostle's testimony nor force in his arguing; so he declares that God judgeth us only in and by him. In this regard of our moral obedience unto Christ lies the way whereby God will be glorified.

Secondly, All things are yet more plain with respect unto institutions of divine worship. The appointment of all divine ordinances under the New Testament was his especial province and work, as the Son and Lord over his own house; and obedience unto him in the observance of them is that which he gives in especial charge unto all his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 18–20. And it is nothing but a loss of

that subjection of soul and conscience unto him which is indispensably required of all believers, that hath set the minds of so many at liberty to do and observe in divine worship what they please, without any regard unto his institutions. It is otherwise with respect unto moral duties; for the things of the moral law have an obligation on our consciences antecedent unto the enforcement of them by the authority of Christ, and there hold us fast. But as unto things of the latter sort, our consciences can no way be affected with a sense of them, or a necessity of obedience in them, but by the sole and immediate authority of Christ himself. If a sense hereof be lost in our minds, we shall not abide in the observance of his commands.

CHAPTER XII.

The especial Principle of Obedience unto the Person of Christ; which is Love—Its Truth and Reality Vindicated.

That which doth enliven and animate the obedience whereof we have discoursed, is love. This himself makes the foundation of all that is acceptable unto him. "If," saith he, "ye love me, keep my commandments," John xiv. 15. As he distinguisheth between love and obedience, so he asserts the former as the foundation of the latter. He accepts of no obedience unto his commands that doth not proceed from love unto his person. That is no love which is not fruitful in obedience; and that is no obedience which proceeds not from love. So he expresseth on both sides: "If a man love me, he will keep my words;" and, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings," verses 23, 24.

In the Old Testament the love of God was the life and substance of all obedience. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, thy mind and strength," was the sum of the law. This includes in it all obedience, and, where it is genuine, will produce all the fruits of it; and where it was not, no multiplication of duties was accepted with him. But this in general we do not now treat of.

That the person of Christ is the especial object of this divine love, which is the fire that kindles the sacrifice of our obedience unto him—this is that alone which at present I design to demonstrate.

The apostle hath recorded a very severe denunciation of divine wrath against all that love him not: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. And what was added unto the curse of the Law we may add unto

this of the Gospel: "And all the people shall say, Amen," Deut. xxvii. 26. And, on the other hand, he prays for grace on all that "love him in sincerity," Eph. vi. 24. Wherefore, none who desire to retain the name of Christians, can deny, in words at least, but that we ought, with all our hearts, to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not so distinguish love from obedience as though it were not itself a part, yea, the chiefest part, of our obedience. So is faith also; yet is it constantly distinguished from obedience, properly so called. This alone is that which I shall demonstrate—namely, that *there is, and ought to be, in all believers, a divine, gracious love unto the person of Christ, immediately fixed on him, whereby they are excited unto, and acted in, all their obedience unto his authority.* Had it been only pleaded, that many who pretend love unto Christ do yet evidence that they love him not, it is that which the Scripture testifieth, and continual experience doth proclaim. If an application of this charge had been made unto them whose sincerity in their profession of love unto him can be no way evicted, it ought to be borne with patience, amongst other reproaches of the same kind that are cast upon them. And some things are to be premised unto the confirmation of our assertion.

1. It is granted that there may be a false pretence of love unto Christ; and as this pretence is ruinous unto the souls of them in whom it is, so it ofttimes renders them prejudicial and troublesome unto others. There ever were, and probably ever will be, hypocrites in the church; and a false pretence of love is of the essential form of hypocrisy. The first great act of hypocrisy, with respect unto Christ, was treachery, veiled with a double pretence of love. He cried, "Hail, Master! and kissed him," who betrayed him. His words and actions proclaimed love, but deceit and treachery were in his heart. Hence the apostle prays for grace on them who love the Lord Jesus ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ—without dissimulation or doubling, without pretences and aims at other ends, without a mixture of corrupt affections; that is, in sincerity, Eph. vi. 24. It was prophesied of him, that many who were strangers unto his grace should lie unto him, Ps. xviii. 44, בְּנֵי נֵכָר יְכַחֲשׁוּ־לִי—feignedly submit, or yield feigned obedience unto him. So is it with them who profess love unto him, yet are enemies of his cross, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 18, 19. All that are called Christians in the world, do, by owning that denomination, profess a love unto Jesus Christ; but greater enemies, greater haters of him, he hath not among the children of men, than many of them are. This falsely pretended love is worse than avowed hatred; neither will the pretence of it stand men in stead at the last day. No other answer will be given unto the plea

of it, be it in whom it will, but "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." Whereas, therefore, he himself hath prescribed this rule unto all who would be esteemed his disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," we may safely conclude, all who live in a neglect of his commands, whatever they pretend or profess, they love him not. And the satisfaction which men, through much darkness, and many corrupt prejudices, have attained unto in the profession of Christian religion, without an internal, sincere love unto Christ himself, is that which ruins religion and their own souls.

2. As there is a false pretence of love unto Christ, so there is, or may be, a false love unto him also. The persons in whom it is may in some measure be sincere, and yet their love unto Christ may not be pure, nor sincere—such as answers the principles and rules of the Gospel; and as many deceive others, so some deceive themselves in this matter. They may think that they love Christ, but indeed do not so; and this I shall manifest in some few instances.

(1.) That love is not sincere and incorrupt which proceedeth not from—which is not a fruit of faith. Those who do not first really believe on Christ, can never sincerely love him. It is faith alone that worketh by love towards Christ and all his saints. If, therefore, any do not believe with that faith which unites them unto Christ, which within purifies the heart, and is outwardly effectual in duties of obedience, whatever they may persuade themselves concerning love unto Christ, it is but a vain delusion. Where the faith of men is dead, their love will not be living and sincere.

(2.) That love is not so which ariseth from false ideas and representations that men make of Christ, or have made of him in their minds. Men may draw images in their minds of what they most fancy, and then dote upon them. So some think of Christ only as a glorious person exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, without farther apprehensions of his natures and offices. So the Roman missionaries represented him unto some of the Indians—concealing from them his cross and sufferings. But every false notion concerning his person or his grace—what he is, hath done, or doth—corrupts the love that is pretended unto him. Shall we think that they love Christ by whom his divine nature is denied? or that those do so who disbelieve the reality of his human nature? or those by whom the union of both in the same person is rejected? There cannot be true evangelical love unto a false Christ, such as these imaginations do fancy.

(3.) So is that love which is not in all things—as to causes, motives, measures, and ends—regulated by the Scripture. This alone gives us the nature, rules, and bounds of sincere spiritual love. We are no more to love Christ, than to fear and worship him, according unto

our own imaginations. From the Scripture are we to derive all the principles and motives of our love. If either the acts or effects of it will not endure a trial thereby, they are false and counterfeit; and many such have been pretended unto, as we shall see immediately.

(4.) That is so, unquestionably, which fixeth itself on undue objects, which, whatever is pretended, are neither Christ nor means of conveying our love unto him. Such is all that love which the Romanists express in their devotion unto images, as they fancy, of Christ; crucifixes, pretended relics of his cross, and the nails that pierced him, with the like superstitious representations of him, and what they suppose he is concerned in. For although they express their devotion with great appearance of ardent affections, under all outward signs of them—in adorations, kissings, prostrations, with sighs and tears; yet all this while it is not Christ which they thus cleave unto, but a cloud of their own imaginations, wherewith their carnal minds are pleased and affected. That is no god which a man heweth out of a tree, though he form it for that end, though he falleth down unto it and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, "Deliver me, for thou art my god," Isa. xliv. 17. The authors of this superstition, whereby the love of innumerable poor souls is depraved and abused, do first frame in their minds what they suppose may solicit or draw out the natural and carnal affections of men unto it, and then outwardly represent it as an object for them. Wherefore some of their representations of him are glorious, and some of them dolorous, according as they aim to excite affections in carnal minds. But, as I said, these things are not Christ, nor is he any way concerned in them.

(5.) I acknowledge there have been great pretences of such a love unto Christ as cannot be justified. Such is that which some of the devotionists of the Roman Church have endeavoured rather to express out of their fancy than declare out of their experience. Raptures, ecstasies, self-annihilations, immediate adhesions and enjoyments, without any act of the understanding, and with a multitude of other swelling words of vanity, they labour to set off what they fancy to be divine love. But there wants not evidences of truth sufficient to defeat these pretences, be they ever so specious or glorious. For—

[1.] As it is by them described, it exceedeth all Scripture precedents. For men to assume unto themselves an apprehension that they love Christ in another manner and kind, in a higher degree at least, and thence to enjoy more intimacy with him, more love from him, than did any of the apostles—John, or Paul, or Peter, or any other of those holy ones whose love unto him is recorded in the Scripture—is intolerable vanity and presumption. But no such things as these devotees pretend unto are mentioned, or in the least inti-

mated concerning them, and their love to their Lord and Master. No man will pretend unto more love than they had, but such as have none at all.

[2.] It is no way directed, warranted, approved, by any command, promise, or rule of the Scripture. As it is without precedent, so it is without precept. And hereby, whether we will or no, all our graces and duties must be tried, as unto any acceptation with God. Whatever pretends to exceed the direction of the Word may safely be rejected—cannot safely be admitted. Whatever enthusiasms or pretended inspirations may be pleaded for the singular practice of what is prescribed in the Scripture, yet none can be allowed for an approved principle of what is not so prescribed. Whatever exceeds the bounds thereof is resolved into the testimony of every distempered imagination. Nor will it avail that these things amongst them are submitted unto the judgment of the church. For the church hath no rule to judge by but the Scripture; and it can pass but one judgment of what is not warranted thereby—namely, that it is to be rejected.

[3.] As it is described by those who applaud it, it is not suited unto the sober, sedate actings of the rational faculties of our souls. For whereas all that God requireth of us, is that we love him with all our souls and all our minds, these men cry up a divine love by an immediate adhesion of the will and the affections unto God, without any actings of the mind and understanding at all. Love, indeed, is the regular acting of our whole souls, by all their faculties and rational powers, in an adherence unto God. But these men have fancied a divine love for them whom they would admire and extol, which disturbs all their regular actings, and renders them of little or no use in that which, without their due exercise, is nothing but fancy. And hence it is that, under pretence of this love, sundry persons among them—yea, all that have pretended unto it—have fallen into such ridiculous excesses and open delusions as sufficiently discover the vanity of the love itself pretended by them.

Wherefore we plead for no other love unto the person of Christ but what the Scripture warrants as unto its nature; what the Gospel requireth of us as our duty; what the natural faculties of our minds are suited unto and given us for; what they are enabled unto by grace; and without which in some degree of sincerity, no man can yield acceptable obedience unto him.

These things being premised, that which we assert is, that there is, and ought to be, in all believers, a religious, gracious love unto the person of Christ, distinct from, and the reason of, their obedience unto his commands;—that is, it is distinct from all other commands; but is also itself commanded and required of us in a way of duty.

That there is in the church such a love unto the person of Christ,

the Scripture testifies, both in the precepts it gives for it and the examples of it. And all those who truly believe cannot apprehend that they understand any thing of faith, or love of Christ, or themselves, by whom it is called in question. If, therefore, I should enlarge on this subject, a great part of the doctrine of the Scripture from first to last must be represented, and a transcript of the hearts of believers, wherein this love is seated and prevalent, be made, according to our ability. And there is no subject that I could more willingly enlarge upon. But I must at present contract myself, in compliance with my design. Two things only I shall demonstrate: 1. That the person of Christ is the object of divine love; 2. What is the nature of that love in us; what are the grounds of it, and the motives unto it, in them that do believe.

In reference unto the first of these, the ensuing position shall be the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

The person of Christ is the principal object of the love of God, and of the whole creation participant of his image. The reason why I thus extend the assertion will appear in the declaration of it.

(1.) No small part of the eternal blessedness of the holy God consisteth in the mutual love of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit. As he is the only-begotten of the Father, he is the first, necessary, adequate, complete object of the whole love of the Father. Hence he says of himself, that from eternity he was "by him, as one brought up with him: and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," Prov. viii. 30—which place was opened before. In him was the ineffable, eternal, unchangeable delight and complacency of the Father, as the full object of his love. The same is expressed in that description of him, John i. 18, "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father." His being the only-begotten Son declares his eternal relation unto the person of the Father, of whom he was begotten in the entire communication of the whole divine nature. Hereon he is in the bosom of the Father—in the eternal embraces of his love, as his only-begotten Son. The Father loves, and cannot but love, his own nature and essential image in him.

Herein originally is God love: "For God is love," 1 John iv. 8. This is the fountain and prototype of all love, as being eternal and necessary. All other acts of love are in God but emanations from hence, and effects of it. As he doeth good because he is good, so he loveth because he is love. He is love eternally and necessarily in this love of the Son; and all other workings of love are but acts of his will, whereby somewhat of it is outwardly expressed. And all love in the creation was introduced from this fountain, to give a shadow and resemblance of it.

Love is that which contemplative men have always almost adored.

Many things have they spoken to evince it to be the light, life, lustre, and glory of the whole creation. But the original and pattern of it was always hid from the wisest philosophers of old. Something they reached after about God's love unto himself, with rest and complacency in his own infinite excellencies; but of this ineffable mutual love of the Father and the Son, both in and by that Spirit which proceeds from them both, they had neither apprehension nor conjecture. Yet, as herein doth the principal part (if we may so speak) of the blessedness of the holy God consist, so is it the only fountain and prototype of all that is truly called love;—a blessing and glory which the creation had never been made partaker of, but only to express, according to the capacity of their several natures, this infinite and eternal love of God! For God's love of himself—which is natural and necessary unto the Divine Being—consists in the mutual complacency of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And it was to express himself, that God made any thing without himself. He made the heavens and the earth to express his being, goodness, and power. He created man "in his own image," to express his holiness and righteousness; and he implanted love in our natures to express this eternal mutual love of the holy persons of the Trinity. But we must leave it under the veil of infinite incomprehensibleness; though admiration and adoration of it be not without the highest spiritual satisfaction.

Again, he is the peculiar object of the love of the Father, of the love of God, as he is incarnate—as he hath taken on him, and hath now discharged, the work of mediation, or continues in the discharge of it; that is, the person of Christ, as God-man, is the peculiar object of the divine love of the Father. The person of Christ in his divine nature is the adequate object of that love of the Father which is "ad intra"—a natural necessary act of the divine essence in its distinct personal existence; and the person of Christ as incarnate, as clothed with human nature, is the first and full object of the love of the Father in those acts of it which are "ad extra," or are towards anything without himself. So he declares himself in the prospect of his future incarnation and work, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," Isa. xlii. 1. The delight of the soul of God, his rest and complacency—which are the great effects of love—are in the Lord Christ, as his elect and servant in the work of mediation. And the testimony hereof he renewed twice from heaven afterward, Matt. iii. 17, "Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" as it is again repeated, Matt. xvii. 5. All things are disposed to give a due sense unto us of this love of God unto him. The testimony concerning it is twice repeated in the same words from heaven. And

the words of it are emphatical unto the utmost of our comprehension: "My Son, my servant, mine elect, my beloved Son, in whom I rest, in whom I delight, and am well pleased." It is the will of God to leave upon our hearts a sense of this love unto Christ; for his voice came from heaven, not for his sake, who was always filled with a sense of this divine love, but for ours, that we might believe it.

This he pleaded as the foundation of all the trust reposed in him, and all the power committed unto him. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand," John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth," John v. 20. And the sense or due apprehension of it is the foundation of Christian religion. Hence he prays that we may know that God hath loved him, John xvii. 23, 26.

In this sense, the person of Christ is the πρῶτον δεκτικὸν—the first recipient subject of all that divine love which extends itself unto the church. It is all, the whole of it, in the first place fixed upon him, and by and through him is communicated unto the church. Whatever it receives in grace and glory, it is but the streams of this fountain—love unto himself. So he prays for all his disciples, "that the love," saith he, "wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them," John xvii. 26. They can be partakers of no other love, neither in itself nor in its fruits, but that alone wherewith the Father first loved him. He loveth him for us all, and us no otherwise but as in him. He makes us "accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. He is the Beloved of the Father κατ' ἐξοχήν; as in all things he was to have the pre-eminence, Col. i. 18. The love of the body is derived unto it from the love unto the Head; and in the love of him doth God love the whole church, and no otherwise. He loves none but as united unto him, and participant of his nature.

Wherefore the love of the Father unto the Son, as the only-begotten, and the essential image of his person, wherein the ineffable delight of the divine nature doth consist, was the fountain and cause of all love in the creation, by an act of the will of God for its representation. And the love of God the Father unto the person of Christ as incarnate, being the first adequate object of divine love wherein there is anything "ad extra," is the fountain and especial cause of all gracious love towards us and in us. And our love unto Christ being the only outward expression and representation of this love of the Father unto him, therein consists the principal part of our renovation into his image. Nothing renders us so like unto God as our love unto Jesus Christ, for he is the principal object of his love;—in him doth his soul rest—in him is he always well pleased. Wherever this is wanting, whatever there may be besides, there is nothing of the image of God. He that loves not Jesus Christ, let him be

Anathema Maranatha; for he is unlike unto God,—his carnal mind is enmity against God.

(2.) Among those who are in the image of God, *the angels* above are of the first consideration. We are, indeed, as yet much in the dark unto the things that are "within the veil." They are above us as unto our present capacity, and hid from us as unto our present state; but there is enough in the Scripture to manifest the adhesion of angels unto the person of Christ by divine love. For love proceeding from sight is the life of the church above; as love proceeding from faith is the life of the church below. And this life the angels themselves do live. For—

[1.] They were all, unto their inexpressible present advantage and security for the future, brought into that recovery and recapitulation of all things which God hath made in him. He hath "gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Eph. i. 10. The things in heaven, and things on earth—angels above, and men below—were originally united in the love of God. God's love unto them, whence springs their mutual love between themselves, was a bond of union between them, rendering them one complete family of God in heaven and earth, as it is called, Eph. iii. 15. On the entrance of sin, whereby mankind forfeited their interest in the love of God, and lost all love unto him, or anything for him, this union was utterly dissolved, and mutual enmity came into the place of its principle in love. God is pleased to gather up these divided parts of his family into one—in one head, which is Christ Jesus. And as there is hereby a union established again between angels and the church in love, so their adherence unto the head, the centre, life, and spring of this union, is by love, and no otherwise. It is not faith, but love, that is the bond of this union between Christ and them; and herein no small part of their blessedness and glory in heaven doth consist.

[2.] That worship, adoration, service, and obedience, which they yield unto him, are all in like manner animated with love and delight. In love they cleave unto him, in love they worship and serve him. They had a command to worship him on his nativity, Heb. i. 6; and they did it with joy, exultation, and praises—all effects of love and delight—Luke ii. 13, 14. And as they continue about the throne of God, they say, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 12. Their continual ascription of glory and praise unto him is an effect of reverential love and delight; and from thence also is their concernment in his gospel and grace, Eph. iii. 9, 10; 1 Peter i. 12. Nor without this love in the highest degree can it be conceived how they

should be blessed and happy in their continual employment. For they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14. Were they not acted herein by their fervent love unto Christ, they could have no delight in their own ministry.

We have not, we cannot have, in this world, a full comprehension of the nature of angelical love. Our notions are but dark and uncertain, in things whereof we can have no experience. Wherefore, we cannot have here a clear intuition into the nature of the love of spirits, whilst our own is mixed with what derives from the actings of the animal spirits of our bodies also. But the blessedness of angels doth not consist in the endowments of their nature—that they are great in power, light, knowledge, and wisdom; for, notwithstanding these things, many of them became devils. But the excellency and blessedness of the angelical state consist in these two things:—1*st*, That they are disposed, and able constantly, inseparably, universally, uninterruptedly, to cleave unto God in love. And as they do so unto God, so they do unto the person of Christ; and through him, as their head, unto God, even the Father. 2*dly*, Add hereunto that gracious reflex sense which they have of the glory, dignity, eternal sweetness, and satisfaction, which arise from hence, and we have the sum of angelical blessedness.

(3.) *The church of mankind* is the other part of the rational creation whereon the image of God is renewed. Love unto the person of Christ, proceeding from faith, is their life, their joy, and glory.

It was so unto the church under the Old Testament. The whole Book of Canticles is designed to no other purpose, but variously to shadow forth, to insinuate and represent, the mutual love of Christ and the church. Blessed is he who understands the sayings of that book, and hath the experience of them in his heart. The 45th Psalm, among others, is designed unto the same purpose. All the glorious descriptions which are given of his person in the residue of the prophets, were only means to excite love unto him, and desires after him. Hence is he called חֶמְדַּת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם, Hag. ii. 7, "The Desire of all nations"—he alone who is desirable unto, and the only beloved of the church gathered out of all nations.

The clear revelation of the person of Christ, so as to render him the direct object of our love, with the causes and reasons of it, is one of the most eminent privileges of the New Testament. And it is variously attested in precepts, promises, instances, and solemn approbations.

Wherever he supposeth or requireth this love in any of his disciples, it is not only as their duty, as that which they were obliged unto by the precepts of the Gospel, but as that without which no other duty whatever is accepted by him. "If," saith he "ye love me, keep my

commandments," John xiv. 15. He so requires love unto himself, as not to expect or approve of any obedience unto his commands without it. It is a great and blessed duty to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ; yet will not he accept of it unless it proceeds out of love unto his person. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? feed my lambs," John xxi. 15–17. Three times did he repeat the same words to him who had failed in his love towards him, by denying him thrice. Without this love unto him, he requires of none to feed his sheep, nor will accept of what they pretend to do therein. It were a blessed thing, if a due apprehension hereof did always abide with them that are called unto that work.

Hereunto doth he annex those blessed promises which comprise the whole of our peace, safety, and consolation in this world. "He," saith he, "that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him," John xiv. 21; and verse 23, "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the glory of these promises, or the least part of the grace that is contained in them? Who can conceive aright of the divine condescension, love, and grace that are expressed in them? How little a portion is it that we know of God in these things! But if we value them not, if we labour not for an experience of them according unto our measure, we have neither lot nor portion in the gospel. The presence and abode of God with us as a Father, manifesting himself to be such unto us, in the infallible pledges and assurances of our adoption—the presence of Christ with us, revealing himself unto us, with all those ineffable mercies wherewith these things are accompanied—are all contained in them. And these promises are peculiarly given unto them that love the person of Christ, and in the exercise of love towards him.

Hereunto are designed the Gospel Gerizim and Ebal—the denunciation of blessings and curses. As blessings are declared to be their portion "who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," Eph. vi. 24,—so those who love him not, have the substance of all curses denounced against them, even "Anathema Maranatha," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. So far shall such persons be, whatever they may profess of outward obedience unto the Gospel, from any blessed interest in the promises of it, as that they are justly liable unto final excision from the church in this world, and eternal malediction in that which is to come.

It is evident, therefore, that the love of the church of believers unto the person of Christ is not a distempered fancy, not a deluding imagination, as some have blasphemed; but that which the nature of their relation unto him makes necessary—that wherein they express their renovation into the image of God—that which the

Scripture indispensably requires of them, and whereon all their spiritual comforts do depend. These things being spoken in general, the particular nature, effects, operations, and motives of this divine love, must now be farther inquired into.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Nature, Operations, and Causes of Divine Love, as it respects the Person of Christ.

That we may the better understand that love unto the person of Christ which we plead for, some things must be premised concerning the nature of divine love in general; and thereon its application unto the particular actings and exercise of it which we inquire into will be plain and easy.

God hath endowed our nature with a faculty and ability of fixing our love upon himself. Many can understand nothing of love but the adherence of their minds and souls unto things visible and sensible, capable of a present natural enjoyment. For things unseen, especially such as are eternal and infinite, they suppose they have a veneration, a religious respect, a devout adoration; but how they should love them, they cannot understand. And the apostle doth grant that there is a greater difficulty in loving things that cannot be seen, than in loving those which are always visibly present unto us, 1 John iv. 20. Howbeit, this divine love hath a more fixed station and prevalency in the minds of men than any other kind of love whatever. For—

1. The principal end why God endued our natures with that great and ruling affection, that hath the most eminent and peculiar power and interest in our souls, was, in the first place, that it might be fixed on himself—that it might be the instrument of our adherence unto him. He did not create this affection in us, that we might be able by it to cast ourselves into the embraces of things natural and sensual. No affection hath such power in the soul to cause it to cleave unto its object, and to work it into a conformity unto it. Most other affections are transient in their operations, and work by a transport of nature—as anger, joy, fear, and the like; but love is capable of a constant exercise, is a spring unto all other affections, and unites the soul with an efficacy not easy to be expressed unto its object. And shall we think that God, who made all things for himself, did create this ruling affection in and with our natures, merely that we might be able to turn from him, and cleave unto other things with a power and faculty above any we have of adherence

unto him? Wherefore, at our first creation, and in our primitive condition, love was the very soul and quickening principle of the life of God; and on our adherence unto him thereby the continuance of our relation unto him did depend. The law, rule, and measure of it was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul." For this end did God create this affection in us. Not only our persons in their nature and being, but in all their powers and faculties, were fitted and prepared unto this end, of living unto God, and coming unto the enjoyment of him. And all their exercise on created objects was to be directed unto this end. Wherefore, the placing of our love on anything before God, or above him, is a formal expression of our apostasy from him.

2. Divine excellencies are a proper, adequate object of our love. The will, indeed, can adhere unto nothing in love, but what the understanding apprehends as unto its truth and being; but it is not necessary that the understanding do fully comprehend the whole nature of that which the will doth so adhere unto. Where a discovery is made unto and by the mind of real goodness and amiableness, the will there can close with its affections. And these are apprehended as absolutely the most perfect in the divine nature and holy properties of it. Whereas, therefore, not only that which is the proper object of love is in the divine excellencies, but it is there only perfectly and absolutely, without the mixture of anything that should give it an alloy, as there is in all creatures, they are the most suitable and adequate object of our love.

There is no greater discovery of the depravation of our natures by sin and degeneracy of our wills from their original rectitude, than that—whereas we are so prone to the love of other things, and therein do seek for satisfaction unto our souls where it is not to be obtained—it is so hard and difficult to raise our hearts unto the love of God. Were it not for that depravation, he would always appear as the only suitable and satisfactory object unto our affections.

3. The especial object of divine, gracious love, is the divine goodness. "How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!" Zech. ix. 17. Nothing is amiable or a proper object of love, but what is good, and as it is so. Hence divine goodness, which is infinite, hath an absolutely perfect amiableness accompanying it. Because his goodness is inexpressible, his beauty is so. "How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!" Hence are we called to give thanks unto the Lord, and to rejoice in him—which are the effects of love—because he is good, Ps. cvi. 1, cxxxvi. 1.

Neither is divine goodness the especial object of our love as absolutely considered; but we have a respect unto it as comprehensive of all that mercy, grace, and bounty, which are suited to give us the

best relief in our present condition and an eternal future reward. Infinite goodness, exerting itself in all that mercy, grace, faithfulness, and bounty, which are needful unto our relief and blessedness in our present condition, is the proper object of our love. Whereas, therefore, this is done only in Christ, there can be no true love of the divine goodness, but in and through him alone.

The goodness of God, as a creator, preserver, and rewarder, was a sufficient, yea, the adequate object of all love antecedently unto the entrance of sin and misery. In them, in God under those considerations, might the soul of man find full satisfaction as unto its present and future blessedness. But since the passing of sin, misery, and death upon us, our love can find no amiableness in any goodness—no rest, complacency, and satisfaction in any—but what is effectual in that grace and mercy by Christ, which we stand in need of for our present recovery and future reward. Nor doth God require of us that we should love him otherwise but as he "is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." So the apostle fully declares it: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 9, 10, 16. God is love, of a nature infinitely good and gracious, so as to be the only object of all divine love. But this love can no way be known, or be so manifested unto us, as that we may and ought to love him, but by his love in Christ, his sending of him and loving us in him. Before this, without this, we do not, we cannot love God. For "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is the cause, the spring and fountain, of all our love to him. They are but empty notions and imaginations, which some speculative persons please themselves withal, about love unto the divine goodness absolutely considered. For however infinitely amiable it may be in itself, it is not so really unto them, it is not suited unto their state and condition, without the consideration of the communications of it unto us in Christ.

4. These things being premised, we may consider the especial nature of this divine love, although I acknowledge that the least part of what believers have an experience of in their own souls can be expressed at least by me. Some few things I shall mention, which may give us a shadow of it, but not the express image of the thing itself.

(1.) *Desire of union* and enjoyment is the first vital act of this

love. The soul, upon the discovery of the excellencies of God, earnestly desires to be united unto them—to be brought near unto that enjoyment of them whereof it is capable, and wherein alone it can find rest and satisfaction. This is essential unto all love; it *unites the mind unto its object*, and rests not but in enjoyment. God's love unto us ariseth out of the overflowing of his own immense goodness, whereof he will communicate the fruits and effects unto us. God is love; and herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only-begotten Son. Yet also doth this love of God tend to the bringing of us unto him, not that he may enjoy us, but that he may be enjoyed by us. This answers the desire of enjoyment in us, Job xiv. 15: "Thou shalt call me;" (that is, out of the dust at the last day;) "thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." God's love will not rest, until it hath brought us unto himself. But our love unto God ariseth from a sense of our own wants—our insufficiency to come unto rest in ourselves, or to attain unto blessedness by our own endeavours. In this state, seeing all in God, and expecting all from the suitableness of his excellencies unto our rest and satisfaction, our souls cleave unto him, with a desire of the nearest union whereof our natures are capable. We are made for him, and cannot rest until we come unto him.

Our goodness extends not unto God; we cannot profit him by any thing that we are, or can do. Wherefore, his love unto us hath not respect originally unto any good in ourselves, but is a gracious, free act of his own. He doeth good for no other reason but because he is good. Nor can his infinite perfections take any cause for their original actings without himself. He wants nothing that he would supply by the enjoyment of us. But we have indigency in ourselves to cause our love to seek an object without ourselves. And so his goodness—with the mercy, grace, and bounty included therein—is the cause, reason, and object of our love. We love them for themselves; and because we are wanting and indigent, we love them with a desire of union and enjoyment—wherein we find that our satisfaction and blessedness doth consist. Love in general unites the mind unto the object—the person loving unto the thing or person beloved. So is it expressed in an instance of human, temporary, changeable love, —namely, that of Jonathan to David. His soul "was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul," 1 Sam. xviii. 1. Love had so effectually united them, as that the soul of David was as his own. Hence are those expressions of this divine love, by "cleaving unto God, following hard after him, thirsting, panting after him," with the like intimations of the most earnest endeavours of our nature after union and enjoyment.

When the soul hath a view by faith (which nothing else can give

it) of the goodness of God as manifested in Christ—that is, of the essential excellencies of his nature as exerting themselves in him—it reacheth after him with its most earnest embraces, and is restless until it comes unto perfect fruition. It sees in God the fountain of life, and would drink of the "river of his pleasures," Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9—that in his "presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore," Ps. xvi. 11. It longs and pants to drink of that fountain—to bathe itself in that river of pleasures; and wherein it comes short of present enjoyment, it lives in hopes that when we "awake, it shall be satisfied with his likeness," Ps. xvii. 15. There is nothing grievous unto a soul filled with this love, but what keeps it from the full enjoyment of these excellencies of God. What doth so *naturally and necessarily*, it groans under. Such is our present state in the body, wherein, in some sense, we are "absent from the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 4, 8, 9. And what doth so *morally*, in the deviations of its will and affections, as *sin*—it hates and abhors and loathes itself for. Under the conduct of this love, the whole tendency of the soul is unto the enjoyment of God;—it would be lost in itself, and found in him,—nothing in itself, and all in him. Absolute complacency herein—that God is what he is, that he should be what he is, and nothing else, and that as such we may be united unto him, and enjoy him according to the capacity of our natures—is the life of divine love.

(2.) It is a love of *assimilation*. It contains in it a desire and intense endeavour to be like unto God, according unto our capacity and measure. The soul sees all goodness, and consequently all that is amiable and lovely, in God—the want of all which it finds in itself. The fruition of his goodness is that which it longs for as its utmost end, and conformity unto it as the means thereof. There is no man who loves not God sincerely, but indeed he would have him to be somewhat that he is not, that he might be the more like unto him. This such persons are pleased withal whilst they can fancy it in any thing, Ps. l. 21. They that love him, would have him be *all that he* is—*as he* is, *and nothing* else; and would be themselves like unto him. And as love hath this tendency, and is that which gives disquietment unto the soul when and wherein we are unlike unto God, so it stirs up constant endeavours after assimilation unto him, and hath a principal efficacy unto that end. Love is the principle that actually assimilates and conforms us unto God, as faith is the principle which originally disposeth thereunto. In our renovation into the image of God, the transforming power is radically seated in faith, but acts itself by love. Love proceeding from faith gradually changeth the soul into the likeness of God; and the more it is in exercise, the more is that change effected.

To labour after conformity unto God by outward actions only, is to make an image of the living God, hewed out of the stock of a dead tree. It is from this vital principle of love that we are not forced into it as by engines, but naturally grow up into the likeness and image of God. For when it is duly affected with the excellencies of God in Christ, it fills the mind with thoughts and contemplations on them, and excites all the affections unto a delight in them. And where the soul acts itself constantly in the mind's contemplation, and the delight of the affections, it will produce assimilation unto the object of them. To love God is the only way and means to be like unto him.

(3.) It is a love of *complacency*, and therein of *benevolence*. Upon that view which we have by spiritual light and faith of the divine goodness, exerting itself in the way before described, our souls do approve of all that is in God, applaud it, adore it, and acquiesce in it. Hence two great duties do arise, and hereon do they depend. First, Joyful ascriptions of glory and honour unto God. All praise and thanksgiving, all blessing, all assignation of glory unto him, because of his excellencies and perfections, do arise from our satisfactory complacence in them. The righteous "rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Ps. xcvii. 12. They are so pleased and satisfied at the remembrance of God's holiness, that it fills their hearts with joy and causeth them to break forth in praises. Praise is nothing but an outward expression of the inward complacency of our hearts in the divine perfections and their operations. And, secondly, Love herein acts itself by benevolence, or the constant inclination of the mind unto all things wherein the glory of God is concerned. It wills all the things wherein the name of God may be sanctified, his praises made glorious, and his will done on earth as it is in heaven. As God says of his own love unto us, that "he will rest in his love, he will joy over us [thee] with singing," Zeph. iii. 17—as having the greatest complacency in it, rejoicing over us with his "whole heart and his whole soul," Jer. xxxii. 41;—so, according unto our measure, do we by love rest in the glorious excellencies of God, rejoicing in them with our whole hearts and our whole souls.

(4.) This divine love is a love of *friendship*. The communion which we have with God therein is so intimate, and accompanied with such spiritual *boldness*, as gives it that denomination. So Abraham was called "The friend of God," Isa. xli. 8; James ii. 23. And because of that mutual trust which is between friends, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant," Ps. xxv. 14. For, as our Saviour teacheth us, "servants" —that is, those who are so, and no more—"know not what their lord doeth;" he rules them, commands them, or requires obedience

from them; but as unto his *secret*—his design and purpose, his counsel and love—they know nothing of it. But saith he unto his disciples, "I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John xv. 15. He proves them to be rightly called his friends, because of the communication of the secret of his mind unto them.

This is the great difference between them who are only servants in the house of God, and those who are so servants as to be friends also. The same commands are given unto all equally, and the same duties are required of all equally, inasmuch as they are equally servants; but those who are no more but so, know nothing of the secret counsel, love, and grace of God, in a due manner. For the natural man receiveth not the things that are of God. Hence all their obedience is *servile*. They know neither the principal motives unto it nor the ends of it. But they who are so servants as to be friends also, they know what their Lord doeth; the secret of the Lord is with them, and he shows them his covenant. They are admitted into an intimate acquaintance with the mind of Christ, ("we have the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 16,) and are thereon encouraged to perform the obedience of servants, with the love and delight of friends.

The same love of friendship is expressed by that intimate *converse* with, and especial *residence* that is between God and believers. God dwelleth in them, and they dwell in God; for God is love, 1 John iv. 16. "If a man," saith the Lord Christ, "love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23; and, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. These are not empty sound of words;—there is substance under them, there is truth in them. Those whose hearts are duly exercised in and unto the love of God have experience of the refreshing approaches both of the Father and of the Son unto their souls, in the communications of a sense of their love, and pledges of their abode with them.

These things have I briefly premised, concerning the nature of divine love, that we may the better apprehend what we understand by it, in the application of it unto the person of Christ. For—

1. The formal object of this love is the *essential properties of the divine nature*—its infinite goodness in particular. Wherever these are, there is the object and reason of this love. But they are all of them in the *person of the Son*, no less than in the person of the Father. As, therefore, we love the Father on this account, so are we to love the Son also. But—

2. The *Person of Christ* is to be considered as he was incarnate, or clothed with our nature. And this takes nothing off from the

formal reason of this love, but only makes an addition unto the motives of it. This, indeed, for a season veiled the loveliness of his divine excellencies, and so turned aside the eyes of many from him. For when he took on him "the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation," he had, unto them who looked on him with carnal eyes, "neither form nor comeliness," that he should be desired or be loved. Howbeit, the entire person of Christ, God and man, is the object of this divine love, in all the acts of the whole exercise of it. That single effect of infinite wisdom and grace, in the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Son of God, renders him the object of this love in a peculiar manner. The way whereby we may attain this peculiar love, and the motives unto it, shall close these considerations.

A due consideration of, and meditation on, the proposal of the person of Christ unto us in the Scripture, are *the proper foundation of this love.* This is the formal reason of our faith in him, and love unto him. He is so proposed unto us in the Scripture, that we may believe in him and love him, and for that very end. And in particular with respect unto our love, to ingenerate it in us, and to excite it unto its due exercise, are those excellencies of his person—as the principal effect of divine wisdom and goodness, which we have before insisted on—frequently proposed unto us. To this end is he represented as "altogether lovely," and the especial glories of his person are delineated, yea, drawn to the life, in the holy records of the Old and New Testaments. It is no work of fancy or imagination—it is not the feigning images in our minds of such things as are meet to satisfy our carnal affections, to excite and act them; but it is a due adherence unto that object which is represented unto faith in the proposal of the Gospel. Therein, as in a glass, do we behold the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and have our souls filled with transforming affections unto him.

The whole Book of Canticles is nothing but a mystical declaration of the mutual love between Christ and the church. And it is expressed by all such ways and means as may represent it intense, fervent, and exceeding all other love whatever; which none, I suppose, will deny, at least on the part of Christ. And a great part of it consists in such descriptions of the person of Christ and his love as may render him amiable and desirable unto our souls, even "altogether lovely." To what end doth the Holy Spirit so graphically describe and represent unto us the beauty and desirableness of his person, if it be not to ingenerate love in us unto him? All want of love unto him on this proposal is the effect of prevalent unbelief. It is pretended that the descriptions given of Christ in this book are allegorical, from whence nothing can be gathered or concluded. But God

forbid we should so reflect on the wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit unto the church—that he hath proposed unto the faith of the church an empty sound and noise of words, without mind or sense. The expressions he useth are figurative, and the whole nature of the discourse, as unto its outward structure, is allegorical. But the things intended are real and substantial; and the metaphors used in the expression of them are suited, in a due attendance unto the analogy of faith, to convey a spiritual understanding and sense of the things themselves proposed in them. The church of God will not part with the unspeakable advantage and consolation—those supports of faith and incentives of love—which it receives by that divine proposal of the person of Christ and his love which is made therein, because some men have no experience of them nor understanding in them. The faith and love of believers is not to be regulated by the ignorance and boldness of them who have neither the one nor the other. The title of the 45th Psalm is, שִׁיר יְדִידֹת, "A song of loves;"—that is, of the mutual love of Christ and the church. And unto this end—that our souls may be stirred up unto the most ardent affection towards him—is a description given us of his person, as "altogether lovely." To what other end is he so evidently delineated in the whole harmony of his divine beauties by the pencil of the Holy Spirit?

Not to insist on particular testimonies, it is evident unto all whose eyes are opened to discern these things, that there is no property of the divine nature which is peculiarly amiable—such as are goodness, grace, love, and bounty, with infinite power and holiness—but it is represented and proposed unto us in the person of the Son of God, to this end, that we should love him above all, and cleave unto him. There is nothing in the human nature, in that fulness of grace and truth which dwelt therein, in that inhabitation of the Spirit which was in him without measure, in any thing of those "all things" wherein he hath the pre-eminence—nothing in his love, condescension, grace, and mercy—nothing in the work that he fulfilled, what he did and suffered therein—nothing in the benefits we receive thereby—nothing in the power and glory that he is exalted unto at the right hand of God—but it is set forth in the Scripture and proposed unto us, that, believing in him, we may love him with all our hearts and souls. And, besides all this, that singular, that infinite effect of divine wisdom, whereunto there is nothing like in all the works of God, and wherewith none of them may be compared—namely, the constitution of his person by the union of his natures therein, whereby he becomes unto us the image of the invisible God, and wherein all the blessed excellencies of his distinct natures are made most illustriously conspicuous in becoming one entire principle of all his mediatory operations on our behalf—is proposed unto us as

the complete object of our faith and love. This is that person whose loveliness and beauty all the angels of God, all the holy ones above, do eternally admire and adore. In him are the infinite treasures of divine wisdom and goodness continually represented unto them. This is he who is the joy, the delight, the love, the glory of the church below. "Thou whom our souls do love," is the title whereby they know him and converse with him, Cant. i. 7, iii. 1, 4. This is he who is the Desire of all nations—the Beloved of God and men.

The mutual intercourse on this ground of love between Christ and the church, is the life and soul of the whole creation; for on the account hereof all things consist in him.

There is more glory under the eye of God, in the sighs, groans, and mournings of poor souls filled with the love of Christ, after the enjoyment of him according to his promises—in their fervent prayers for his manifestation of himself unto them—in the refreshments and unspeakable joys which they have in his gracious visits and embraces of his love—than in the thrones and diadems of all the monarchs on the earth. Nor will they themselves part with the ineffable satisfactions which they have in these things, for all that this world can do for them or unto them. "Mallem ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare." These things have not only rendered prisons and dungeons more desirable unto them than the most goodly palaces, on future accounts, but have made them really places of such refreshment and joys as men shall seek in vain to extract out of all the comforts that this world can afford.

O curvæ in terras animæ et cœlestium inanes!

Many there are who, not comprehending, not being affected with, that divine, spiritual description of the person of Christ which is given us by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, do feign unto themselves false representations of him by images and pictures, so as to excite carnal and corrupt affections in their minds. By the help of their outward senses, they reflect on their imaginations the shape of a human body, cast into postures and circumstances dolorous or triumphant; and so, by the working of their fancy, raise a commotion of mind in themselves, which they suppose to be love unto Christ. But all these idols are teachers of lies. The true beauty and amiableness of the person of Christ, which is the formal object and cause of divine love, is so far from being represented herein, as that the mind is thereby wholly diverted from the contemplation of it. For no more can be so pictured unto us but what may belong unto a mere man, and what is arbitrarily referred unto Christ, not by faith, but by corrupt imagination.

The *beauty of the person of Christ*, as represented in the Scripture,

consists in things invisible unto the eyes of flesh. They are such as no hand of man can represent or shadow. It is the eye of faith alone that can see this King in his beauty. What else can contemplate on the uncreated glories of his divine nature? Can the hand of man represent the union of his natures in the same person, wherein he is peculiarly amiable? What eye can discern the mutual communications of the properties of his different natures in the same person, which depends thereon, whence it is that God laid down his life for us, and purchased his church with his own blood? In these things, O vain man! doth the loveliness of the person of Christ unto the souls of believers consist, and not in those strokes of art which fancy hath guided a skilful hand and pencil unto. And what eye of flesh can discern the inhabitation of the Spirit in all fulness in the human nature? Can his condescension, his love, his grace, his power, his compassion, his offices, his fitness and ability to save sinners, be deciphered on a tablet, or engraven on wood or stone? However such pictures may be adorned, however beautified and enriched, they are not that Christ which the soul of the spouse doth love;—they are not any means of representing his love unto us, or of conveying our love unto him;—they only divert the minds of superstitious persons from the Son of God, unto the embraces of a cloud, composed of fancy and imagination.

Others there are who abhor these *idols*, and when they have so done, commit *sacrilege*. As they reject images, so they seem to do all love unto the person of Christ, distinct from other acts of obedience, as a fond imagination. But the most superstitious love unto Christ—that is, love acted in ways tainted with superstition—is better than none at all. But with what eyes do such persons read the Scriptures? With what hearts do they consider them? What do they conceive is the intention of the Holy Ghost in all those descriptions which he gives us of the person of Christ as amiable and desirable above all things, making therewithal a proposal of him unto our affections—inciting us to receive him by faith, and to cleave unto him in love? yea, to what end is our nature endued with this affection—unto what end is the power of it renewed in us by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit—if it may not be fixed on this most proper and excellent object of it?

This is the foundation of our love unto Christ—namely, *the revelation and proposal of him unto us in the Scripture* as altogether lovely. The discovery that is made therein of the glorious excellencies and endowments of his person—of his love, his goodness, and grace—of his worth and work—is that which engageth the affections of believers unto him. It may be said, that if there be such a proposal of him made unto all promiscuously, then all would equally

discern his amiableness and be affected with it, who assent equally unto the truth of that revelation. But it hath always fallen out otherwise. In the days of his flesh, some that looked on him could see neither "form nor comeliness" in him wherefore he should be desired; others saw his glory—"glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." To some he is precious; unto others he is disallowed and rejected—a stone which the builders refused, when others brought it forth, crying, "Grace, grace unto it!" as the head of the corner. Some can see nothing but weakness in him; unto others the wisdom and power of God do evidently shine forth in him. Wherefore it must be said, that notwithstanding that open, plain representation that is made of him in the Scripture, unless the Holy Spirit gives us eyes to discern it, and circumcise our hearts by the cutting off corrupt prejudices and all effects of unbelief, implanting in them, by the efficacy of his grace, this blessed affection of love unto him, all these things will make no impression on our minds.

As it was with the people on *the giving of the law*, notwithstanding all the great and mighty works which God had wrought among them, yet having not given them "a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear"—which he affirms that he had not done, Deut. xxix. 4,—they were not moved unto faith or obedience by them; so is it in *the preaching of the gospel.* Notwithstanding all the blessed revelation that is made of the excellencies of the person of Christ therein, yet those into whose hearts God doth not shine to give the knowledge of his glory in his face, can discern nothing of it, nor are their hearts affected with it.

We do not, therefore, in these things, follow "cunningly-devised fables." We do not indulge unto our own fancies and imaginations;—they are not unaccountable raptures or ecstasies which are pretended unto, nor such an artificial concatenation of thoughts as some ignorant of these things do boast that they can give an account of. Our love to Christ ariseth alone from the revelation that is made of him in the Scripture—is ingenerated, regulated, measured, and is to be judged thereby.

CHAPTER XIV.

Motives unto the Love of Christ.

The *motives* unto this love of Christ is the last thing, on this head of our religious respect unto him, that I shall speak unto.

When God required of the church the first and highest act of reli-

gion, the sole foundation of all others—namely, to take him as their God, to own, believe, and trust in him alone as such, (which is wholly due unto him for what he is, without any other consideration whatever,)—yet he thought meet to add a motive unto the performance of that duty from what he had done for them, Exod. xx. 2, 3. The sense of the first command is, that we should take him alone for our God; for he is so, and there is no other. But in the prescription of this duty unto the church, he minds them of the benefits which they had received from him in bringing them out of the house of bondage.

God, in his wisdom and grace, ordereth all the causes and reasons of our duty, so as that all the rational powers and faculties of our souls may be exercised therein. Wherefore he doth not only propose himself unto us, nor is Christ merely proposed unto us as the proper object of our affections, but he calls us also unto the consideration of all those things that may satisfy our souls that it is the most just, necessary, reasonable and advantageous course for us so to fix our affections on him.

And these considerations are taken from all that he did for us, with the reasons and grounds why he did it. We love him principally and ultimately for what he is; but nextly and immediately for what he did. What he did for us is first proposed unto us, and it is that which our souls are first affected withal. For they are originally acted in all things by a sense of the want which they have, and a desire of the blessedness which they have not. This directs them unto what he hath done for sinners; but that leads immediately unto the consideration of what he is in himself. And when our love is fixed on him or his person, then all those things wherewith, from a sense of our own wants and desires, we were first affected, become motives unto the confirming and increasing of that love. This is the constant method of the Scripture; it first proposeth unto us what the Lord Christ hath done for us, especially in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, in his oblation and intercession, with the benefits which we receive thereby. Hereby it leads us unto his person, and presseth the consideration of all other things to engage our love unto him. See Phil. ii. 5–11, with chap. iii. 8–11.

Motives unto the love of Christ are so great, so many, so diffused through the whole dispensation of God in him unto us, as that they can by no hand be fully expressed, let it be allowed ever so much to enlarge in the declaration of them; much less can they be represented in that short discourse whereof but a very small part is allotted unto their consideration—such as ours is at present. The studying, the collection of them or so many of them as we are able, the meditation on them and improvement of them, are among the principal

duties of our whole lives. What I shall offer is the reduction of them unto these two heads: 1. *The acts of Christ*, which is the substance of them; and, 2. The *spring and fountain* of those acts, which is the life of them.

1. In general they are all the acts of his mediatory office, with all the fruits of them, whereof we are made partakers. There is not any thing that he did or doth, in the discharge of his mediatory office, from the first susception of it in his incarnation in the womb of the blessed Virgin unto his present intercession in heaven, but is an effectual motive unto the love of him; and as such is proposed unto us in the Scripture. Whatever he did or doth with or towards us in the name of God, as the king and prophet of the church—whatever he did or doth with God for us, as our high priest—it all speaks this language in the hearts of them that believe: O love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

The consideration of what Christ thus did and doth for us is inseparable from that of the benefits which we receive thereby. A due mixture of both these—of what he did for us, and what we obtain thereby—compriseth the substance of these motives: "Who loved me, and gave himself for me"—"Who loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God"—"For thou wast slain, and hast bought us unto God with thy blood." And both these are of a transcendent nature, requiring our love to be so also. Who is able to comprehend the glory of the mediatory actings of the Son of God, in the assumption of our nature—in what he did and suffered therein? And for us, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, what we receive thereby. The least benefit, and that obtained by the least expense of trouble or charge, deserveth love, and leaveth the brand of a crime where it is not so entertained. What, then, do the greatest deserve, and those procured by the greatest expense—even the price of the blood of the Son of God?

If we have any faith concerning these things, it will produce love, as that love will obedience. Whatever we profess concerning them, it springs from tradition and opinion, and not from faith, if it engage not our souls into the love of him. The frame of heart which ensues on the real faith of these things is expressed, Ps. ciii. 1–5, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Let men pretend what they will, there needs no greater, no other evidence, to

prove that any one doth not really believe the things that are reported in the Gospel, concerning the mediatory actings of Christ, or that he hath no experience in his own soul and conscience of the fruits and effects of them, than this—that his heart is not engaged by them unto the most ardent love towards his person.

He is no Christian who lives not much in the meditation of the mediation of Christ, and the especial acts of it. Some may more abound in that work than others, as it is fixed, formed and regular; some may be more able than others to dispose their thoughts concerning them into method and order; some may be more diligent than others in the observation of times for the solemn performance of this duty; some may be able to rise to higher and clearer apprehensions of them than others. But as for those, the bent of whose minds doth not lie towards thoughts of them—whose hearts are not on all occasions retreating unto the remembrance of them—who embrace not all opportunities to call them over as they are able—on what grounds can they be esteemed Christians? how do they live by the faith of the Son of God? Are the great things of the Gospel, of the mediation of Christ, proposed unto us, as those which we may think of when we have nothing else to do, that we may meditate upon or neglect at our pleasure—as those wherein our concernment is so small as that they must give place unto all other occasions or diversions whatever? Nay; if our minds are not filled with these things—if Christ doth not dwell plentifully in our hearts by faith—if our souls are not possessed with them, and in their whole inward frame and constitution so cast into this mould as to be led by a natural complacency unto a converse with them—we are strangers unto the life of faith. And if we are thus conversant about these things, they will engage our hearts into the love of the person of Christ. To suppose the contrary, is indeed to deny the truth and reality of them all, and to turn the Gospel into a fable.

Take one instance from among the rest—namely, his death. Hath he the heart of a Christian, who doth not often meditate on the death of his Saviour, who doth not derive his life from it? Who can look into the Gospel and not fix on those lines which either immediately and directly, or through some other paths of divine grace and wisdom, do lead him thereunto? And can any have believing thoughts concerning the death of Christ, and not have his heart affected with ardent love unto his person? Christ in the Gospel "is evidently set forth, crucified" before us. Can any by the eye of faith look on this bleeding, dying Redeemer, and suppose love unto his person to be nothing but the work of fancy or imagination? They know the contrary, who "always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 10. As his whole "name," in

all that he did, is "as ointment poured forth," for which "the virgins love him," Cant. i. 3,—so this precious perfume of his death is that wherewith their hearts are ravished in a peculiar manner.

Again: as there can be no faith in Christ where there is no love unto him on the account of his mediatory acts; so, where it is not, the want of it casteth persons under the highest guilt of ingratitude that our nature is liable unto. The highest aggravation of the sin of angels was their ingratitude unto their Maker. For whereas, by his mere will and pleasure, they were stated in the highest excellency, pre-eminence, and dignity, that he thought good to communicate unto any creatures—or, it may be, that any mere created nature is capable of in itself—they were unthankful for what they had so received from undeserved goodness and bounty; and so cast themselves into everlasting ruin. But yet the sin of men, in their ingratitude towards Christ on the account of what he hath done for them, is attended with an aggravation above that of the angels. For although the angels were originally instated in that condition of dignity which in this world we cannot attain unto, yet were they not redeemed and recovered from misery as we are.

In all the crowd of evil and wicked men that the world is pestered withal, there are none, by common consent, so stigmatized for unworthy villany, as those who are signally ungrateful for singular benefits. If persons are unthankful unto them, if they have not the highest love for them, who redeem them from ignominy and death, and instate them in a plentiful inheritance, (if any such instances may be given,) and that with the greatest expense of labour and charge;—mankind, without any regret, doth tacitly condemn them unto greater miseries than those which they were delivered from. What, then, will be the condition of them whose hearts are not so affected with the mediation of Christ and the fruits of it, as to engage the best, the choicest of their affections unto him! The gospel itself will be "a savour of death" unto such ungrateful wretches.

2. That which the Scripture principally insisteth on as the motive of our love unto Christ, is his love unto us—which was the principle of all his mediatory actings in our behalf.

Love is that jewel of human nature which commands a valuation wherever it is found. Let other circumstances be what they will, whatever distances between persons may be made by them, yet real love, where it is evidenced so to be, is not despised by any but such as degenerate into profligate brutality. If it be so stated as that it can produce no outward effects advantageous unto them that are beloved, yet it commands a respect, as it were, whether we will or no, and some return in its own kind. Especially it doth so if it be altogether undeserved, and so evidenceth itself to proceed from a good-

ness of nature, and an inclination unto the good of them on whom it is fixed. For, whereas the essential nature of love consisteth in willing good unto them that are beloved—where the act of the will is real, sincere, and constantly exercised, without any defect of it on our part, no restraints can possibly be put upon our minds from going out in some acts of love again upon its account, unless all their faculties are utterly depraved by habits of brutish and filthy lusts. But when this love, which is thus undeserved, doth also abound in effects troublesome and chargeable in them in whom it is, and highly beneficial unto them on whom it is placed—if there be any such affection left in the nature of any man, it will prevail unto a reciprocal love. And all these things are found in the love of Christ, unto that degree and height as nothing parallel unto it can be found in the whole creation. I shall briefly speak of it under two general heads.

(1.) The sole spring of all the mediatory actings of Christ, both in the susception of our nature and in all that he did and suffered therein, was his own mere love and grace, working by pity and compassion. It is true, he undertook this work principally with respect unto the glory of God, and out of love unto him. But with respect unto us, his only motive unto it was his abundant, overflowing love. And this is especially remembered unto us in that instance wherein it carried him through the greatest difficulties—namely, in his death and the oblation of himself on our behalf, Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25, 26; 1 John iii. 16; Rev. i. 5, 6. This alone inclined the Son of God to undertake the glorious work of our redemption, and carried him through the death and dread which he underwent in the accomplishment of it.

Should I engage into the consideration of this love of Christ, which was the great means of conveying all the effects of divine wisdom and grace unto the church,—that glass which God chose to represent himself and all his goodness in unto believers,—that spirit of life in the wheel of all the motions of the person of Christ in the redemption of the church unto the eternal glory of God, his own and that of his redeemed also,—that mirror wherein the holy angels and blessed saints shall for ever contemplate the divine excellencies in their suitable operations;—I must now begin a discourse much larger than that which I have passed through. But it is not suited unto my present design so to do. Nor, considering the growing apprehensions of many about the person of Christ, which are utterly destructive of the whole nature of that love which we ascribe unto him, do I know how soon a more distinct explication and defence of it may be called for. And this cause will not be forsaken.

They know nothing of the life and power of the gospel, nothing of the reality of the grace of God, nor do they believe aright one article

of the Christian faith, whose hearts are not sensible of the love of Christ herein; nor is he sensible of the love of Christ, whose affections are not thereon drawn out unto him. I say, they make a pageant of religion,—a fable for the theatre of the world,—a business of fancy and opinion,—whose hearts are not really affected with the love of Christ, in the susception and discharge of the work of mediation, so as to have real and spiritually-sensible affections for him. Men may babble things which they have learned by rote; they have no real acquaintance with Christianity, who imagine that the placing of the most intense affections of our souls on the person of Christ—the loving him with all our hearts because of his love—our being overcome thereby until we are sick of love—the constant motions of our souls towards him with delight and adherence—are but fancies and imaginations. I renounce that religion, be it whose it will, that teacheth, insinuateth, or giveth countenance unto, such abominations. That doctrine is as discrepant from the Gospel as the Alkoran—as contrary to the experience of believers as what is acted in and by the devils—which instructs men unto a contempt of the most fervent love unto Christ, or casts reflections upon it. I had rather choose my eternal lot and portion with the meanest believer, who, being effectually sensible of the love of Christ, spends his days in mourning that he can love him no more than he finds himself on his utmost endeavours for the discharge of his duty to do, than with the best of them, whose vain speculations and a false pretence of reason puff them up unto a contempt of these things.

(2.) This love of Christ unto the church is singular in all those qualifications which render love obliging unto reciprocal affections. It is so in its reality. There can be no love amongst men, but will derive something from that disorder which is in their affections in their highest actings. But the love of Christ is pure and absolutely free from any alloy. There cannot be the least suspicion of anything of self in it. And it is absolutely undeserved. Nothing can be found amongst men that can represent or exemplify its freedom from any desert on our part. The most candid and ingenuous love amongst us is, when we love another for his worth, excellency, and usefulness, though we have no singular benefit of them ourselves; but not the least of any of these things were found in them on whom he set his love, until they were wrought in them, as effects of that love which he set upon them.

Men sometimes may rise up unto such a high degree and instance in love, as that they will even die for one another; but then it must be on a superlative esteem which they have of their worth and merit. It may be, saith the apostle, treating of the love of Christ, and of God in him, that "for a good man some would even dare to die," Rom.

v. 7. It must be for a good man—one who is justly esteemed "commune bonum," a public good to mankind—one whose benignity is ready to exercise loving-kindness on all occasions, which is the estate of a good man;—peradventure some would even dare to die for such a man. This is the height of what love among men can rise unto; and if it hath been instanced in any, it hath been accompanied with an open mixture of vain-glory and desire of renown. But the Lord Christ placed his love on us, that love from whence he died for us, when we were sinners and ungodly; that is, every thing which might render us unamiable and undeserving. Though we were as deformed as sin could render us, and more deeply indebted than the whole creation could pay or answer, yet did he fix his love upon us, to free us from that condition, and to render us meet for the most intimate society with himself. Never was there love which had such effects—which cost him so dear in whom it was, and proved so advantageous unto them on whom it was placed. In the pursuit of it he underwent everything that is evil in his own person, and we receive everything that is good in the favour of God and eternal blessedness.

On the account of these things, the apostle ascribeth a constraining power unto the love of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14. And if it constraineth us unto any return unto him, it doth so unto that of love in the first place. For no suitable return can be made for love but love, at least not without it. As love cannot be purchased—"For if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned," Cant. viii. 7,—so if a man would give all the world for a requital of love, without love it would be despised. To fancy that all the love of Christ unto us consists in the precepts and promises of the Gospel, and all our love unto him in the observance of his commands, without a real love in him unto our persons, like that of a "husband unto a wife," Eph. v. 25, 26, or a holy affection in our hearts and minds unto his person, is to overthrow the whole power of religion—to despoil it of its life and soul, leaving nothing but the carcase of it.

This love unto Christ, and unto God in him, because of his love unto us, is the principal instance of divine love, the touchstone of its reality and sincerity. Whatever men may boast of their affectionate endearments unto the divine goodness, if it be not founded in a sense of this love of Christ, and the love of God in him, they are but empty notions they flourish withal, and their deceived hearts feed upon ashes. It is in Christ alone that God is declared to be love; without an apprehension whereof none can love him as they ought. In him alone that infinite goodness, which is the peculiar object of divine love, is truly represented unto us, without any such deceiving phantasms as the workings of fancy or depravation of reason may impose upon us. And on him doth the saving communication of all the effects of it

depend. And an infinite condescension is it in the holy God, so to express his "glory in the face of Jesus Christ," or to propose himself as the object of our love in and through him. For considering our weakness as to an immediate comprehension of the infinite excellencies of the divine nature, or to bear the rays of his resplendent glory, seeing none can see his face and live, it is the most adorable effect of divine wisdom and grace, that we are admitted unto the contemplation of them in the person of Jesus Christ.

There is yet farther evidence to be given of this love unto the person of Christ, from all those blessed effects of it which are declared in the Scripture, and whereof believers have the experience in themselves. But something I have spoken concerning them formerly, in my discourse about communion with God; and the nature of the present design will not admit of enlargement upon them.

CHAPTER XV.

Conformity unto Christ, and Following his Example.

III. The third thing proposed to declare the use of the person of Christ in religion, is that *conformity* which is required of us unto him. This is the great design and projection of all believers. Every one of them hath the idea or image of Christ in his mind, in the eye of faith, as it is represented unto him in the glass of the Gospel: Τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι κ. τ. λ., 2 Cor. iii. 18. We behold his glory "in a glass," which implants the image of it on our minds. And hereby the mind is transformed into the same image, made like unto Christ so represented unto us—which is the conformity we speak of. Hence every true believer hath his heart under the conduct of an habitual inclination and desire to be like unto Christ. And it were easy to demonstrate, that where this is not, there is neither faith nor love. Faith will cast the soul into the form or frame of the thing believed, Rom. vi. 17. And all sincere love worketh an assimilation. Wherefore the best evidence of a real principle of the life of God in any soul—of the sincerity of faith, love, and obedience—is an internal cordial endeavour, operative on all occasions, after conformity unto Jesus Christ.

There are two parts of the duty proposed. The first respects *the internal grace and holiness* of the human nature of Christ; the other, *his example in duties of obedience*. And both of them—both materially as to the things wherein they consist, and formally as they were his or in him—belong unto the constitution of a true disciple.

In the *first* place, Internal conformity unto his habitual grace and

holiness is the fundamental design of a Christian life. That which is the best without it is a pretended imitation of his example in outward duties of obedience. I call it pretended, because where the first design is wanting, it is no more but so; nor is it acceptable to Christ nor approved by him. And therefore an attempt unto that end hath often issued in formality, hypocrisy, and superstition. I shall therefore lay down the grounds of this design, the nature of it, and the means of its pursuit.

1. God, in the human nature of Christ, did perfectly renew that blessed image of his on our nature which we lost in Adam, with an addition of many glorious endowments which Adam was not made partaker of. God did not renew it in his nature as though that portion of it whereof he was partaker had ever been destitute or deprived of it, as it is with the same nature in all other persons. For he derived not his nature from Adam in the same way that we do; nor was he ever in Adam as the public representative of our nature, as we were. But our nature in him had the image of God implanted in it, which was lost and separated from the same nature in all other instances of its subsistence. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,"—that he should be "full of grace and truth," and "in all things have the pre-eminence." But of these gracious endowments of the human nature of Christ I have discoursed elsewhere.

2. One end of God in filling the human nature of Christ with all grace, in implanting his glorious image upon it, was, that he might in him propose *an example* of what he would by the same grace renew us unto, and what we ought in a way of duty to labour after. The fulness of grace was necessary unto the human nature of Christ, from its hypostatical union with the Son of God. For whereas therein the "fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily," it became τὸ ἅγιον, a "holy thing," Luke i. 35. It was also necessary unto him, as unto his own obedience in the flesh, wherein he fulfilled all righteousness, "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Peter ii. 22. And it was so unto the discharge of the office he undertook; for "such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. Howbeit, the infinite wisdom of God had this farther design in it also,—namely, that he might be the pattern and example of the renovation of the image of God in us, and of the glory that doth ensue thereon. He is in the eye of God as the idea of what he intends in us, in the communication of grace and glory; and he ought to be so in ours, as unto all that we aim at in a way of duty.

He hath "predestinated us to be conformed unto the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. In the collation of all grace on Christ, God designed to

make him "the first-born of many brethren;" that is, not only to give him the power and authority of the first-born, with the trust of the whole inheritance to be communicated unto them, but also as the example of what he would bring them unto. "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11. It is Christ who sanctifieth believers; yet is it from God, who first sanctified him, that he and they might be of one, and so become brethren, as bearing the image of the same Father. God designed and gave unto Christ grace and glory; and he did it that he might be the prototype of what he designed unto us, and would bestow upon us. Hence the apostle shows that the effect of this predestination to conformity unto the image of the Son is the communication of all effectual, saving grace, with the glory that ensues thereon, Rom. viii. 30, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

The great design of God in his grace is, that as we have borne the "image of the first Adam" in the depravation of our natures, so we should bear the "image of the second" in their renovation. "As we have borne the image of the earthy," so "we shall bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 49. And as he is the pattern of all our graces, so he is of glory also. All our glory will consist in our being "made like unto him;" which, what it is, doth not as yet appear, 1 John iii. 2. For "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Phil. iii. 21. Wherefore the fulness of grace was bestowed on the human nature of Christ, and the image of God gloriously implanted thereon, that it might be the prototype and example of what the church was through him to be made partaker of. That which God intends for us in the internal communication of his grace, and in the use of all the ordinances of the church, is, that we may come unto the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13. There is a fulness of all grace in Christ. Hereunto are we to be brought, according to the measure that is designed unto every one of us. "For unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," verse 7. He hath, in his sovereign grace, assigned different measures unto those on whom he doth bestow it. And therefore it is called "the stature," because as we grow gradually unto it, as men do unto their just stature; so there is a variety in what we attain unto, as there is in the statures of men, who are yet all perfect in their proportion.

3. This image of God in Christ is represented unto us in the *Gospel.* Being lost from our nature, it was utterly impossible we should have any just comprehension of it. There could be no steady notion of

the image of God, until it was renewed and exemplified in the human nature of Christ. And thereon, without the knowledge of him, the wisest of men have taken those things to render men most like unto God which were adverse unto him. Such were the most of those things which the heathens adored as heroic virtues. But being perfectly exemplified in Christ, it is now plainly represented unto us in the Gospel. Therein with open face we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The veil being taken away from divine revelations by the doctrine of the Gospel, and from our hearts "by the Lord the Spirit," we behold the image of God in Christ with open face; which is the principal means of our being transformed into it. The Gospel is the declaration of Christ unto us, and the glory of God in him; as unto many other ends, so in especial, that we might in him behold and contemplate that image of God we are gradually to be renewed into. Hence, we are so therein to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, as to be "renewed in the spirit of our mind," and to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 20, 23, 24,— that is, "renewed after the image of him who created him," Col. iii. 10.

4. It is, therefore, evident that the life of God in us consists in conformity unto Christ; nor is the Holy Spirit, as the principal and efficient cause of it, given unto us for any other end but to unite us unto him, and make us like him. Wherefore, the original Gospel duty, which animates and rectifies all others, is a design for conformity unto Christ in all the gracious principles and qualifications of his holy soul, wherein the image of God in him doth consist. As he is the prototype and exemplar in the eye of God for the communication of all grace unto us, so he ought to be the great example in the eye of our faith in all our obedience unto God, in our compliance with all that he requireth of us.

God himself, or the divine nature in its holy perfections, is the ultimate object and idea of our transformation in the renewing of our minds. And, therefore, under the Old Testament, before the incarnation of the Son, he proposed his own holiness immediately as the pattern of the church: "Be ye holy, for the Lord your God is holy," Lev. xi. 44, xix. 2, xx. 26. But the law made nothing perfect. For to complete this great injunction, there was yet wanting an express example of the holiness required; which is not given us but in him who is "the first-born, the image of the invisible God."

There was a notion, even among the philosophers, that the principal endeavour of a wise man was to be like unto God. But in the improvement of it, the best of them fell into foolish and proud imaginations. Howbeit, the notion itself was the principal beam of our *primigenial light*, the best relic of our natural perfections; and

those who are not some way under the power of a design to be like unto God are every way like unto the devil. But those persons who had nothing but the absolute essential properties of the divine nature to contemplate on in the light of reason, failed all of them, both in the notion itself of conformity unto God, and especially in the practical improvement of it. Whatever men may fancy to the contrary, it is the design of the apostle, in sundry places of his writings, to prove that they did so, especially Rom. i.; 1 Cor. i. Wherefore, it was an infinite condescension of divine wisdom and grace, gloriously to implant that image of his which we are to endeavour conformity unto in the human nature of Christ, and then so fully to represent and propose it unto us in the revelation of the Gospel.

The infinite perfections of God, considered absolutely in themselves, are accompanied with such an incomprehensible glory as it is hard to conceive how they are the object of our imitation. But the representation that is made of them in Christ, as the image of the invisible God, is so suited to the renewed faculties of our souls, so congenial unto the new creature or the gracious principle of spiritual life in us, that the mind can dwell on the contemplation of them, and be thereby transformed into the same image.

Herein lies much of the life and power of Christian religion, as it resides in the souls of men. This is the prevailing design of the minds of them that truly believe the Gospel; they would in all things be like unto Jesus Christ. And I shall briefly show—(1.) *What* is required hereunto; and, (2.) What is to be done in a way of *duty* for the attaining that end.

(1.) A *spiritual light*, to discern the beauty, glory, and amiableness of grace in Christ, is required hereunto. We can have no real design of conformity unto him, unless we have their eyes who "beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. Nor is it enough that we seem to discern the glory of his person, unless we see a beauty and excellency in every grace that is in him. "Learn of me," saith he; "for I am meek and lowly in heart," Matt. xi. 29. If we are not able to discern an excellency in meekness and lowliness of heart, (as they are things generally despised,) how shall we sincerely endeavour after conformity unto Christ in them? The like may be said of all his other gracious qualifications. His zeal, his patience, his self-denial, his readiness for the cross, his love unto his enemies, his benignity to all mankind, his faith and fervency in prayer, his love to God, his compassion towards the souls of men, his unweariedness in doing good, his purity, his universal holiness;—unless we have a spiritual light to discern the glory and amiableness of them all, as they were in him, we speak in vain of any design for conformity unto him.

And this we have not, unless God shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is, I say, a foolish thing to talk of the imitation of Christ, whilst really, through the darkness of our minds, we discern not that there is an excellency in the things wherein we ought to be like unto him.

(2.) *Love unto them so discovered in a beam of heavenly light,* is required unto the same end. No soul can have a design of conformity unto Christ but his who so likes and loves the graces that were in him, as to esteem a participation of them in their power to be the greatest advantage, to be the most invaluable privilege, that can in this world be attained. It is the savour of his good ointments for which the virgins love him, cleave unto him, and endeavour to be like him. In that whereof we now discourse—namely, of conformity unto him—he is the representative of the image of God unto us. And, if we do not love and prize above all things those gracious qualifications and dispositions of mind wherein it doth consist, whatever we may pretend of the imitation of Christ in any outward acts or duties of obedience, we have no design of conformity unto him. He who sees and admires the glory of Christ as filled with these graces—as he "was fairer than the children of men," because "grace was poured into his lips"—unto whom nothing is so desirable as to have the same mind, the same heart, the same spirit that was in Christ Jesus—is prepared to press after conformity unto him. And unto such a soul the representation of all these excellencies in the person of Christ is the great incentive, motive, and guide, in and unto all internal obedience unto God.

Lastly, That wherein we are to labour for this conformity may be reduced unto two heads.

[1.] *An opposition unto all sin,* in the root, principle, and most secret springs of it, or original cleavings unto our nature. He "did no sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth." He "was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He was the "Lamb of God, without spot or blemish;" like unto us, yet without sin. Not the least tincture of sin did ever make an approach unto his holy nature. He was absolutely free from every drop of that *fomes* which hath invaded us in our depraved condition. Wherefore, to be freed from all sin, is the first general part of an endeavour for conformity unto Christ. And although we cannot perfectly attain hereunto in this life, as we have "not already attained, nor are already perfect," yet he who groaneth not in himself after it—who doth not loathe every thing that is of the remainder of sin in him and himself for it—who doth not labour after its absolute and universal extirpation—hath no sincere design of conformity unto Christ, nor can so have. He who endeavours to be like him, must

"purify himself, even as he is pure." Thoughts of the purity of Christ, in his absolute freedom from the least tincture of sin, will not suffer a believer to be negligent, at any time, for the endeavouring the utter ruin of that which makes him unlike unto him. And it is a blessed advantage unto faith, in the work of mortification of sin, that we have such a pattern continually before us.

[2.] *The due improvement of, and continual growth, in every grace,* is the other general part of this duty. In the exercise of his own all-fulness of grace, both in moral duties of obedience and the especial duties of his office, did the glory of Christ on the earth consist. Wherefore, to abound in the exercise of every grace—to grow in the root and thrive in the fruit of them—is to be conformed unto the image of the Son of God.

Secondly, The following the *example* of Christ in all duties towards God and men, in his whole conversation on the earth, is the second part of the instance now given concerning the use of the person of Christ in religion. The field is large which here lies before us, and filled with numberless blessed instances. I cannot here enter into it; and the mistakes that have been in a pretence unto it, require that it should be handled distinctly and at large by itself; which, if God will, may be done in due time. One or two general instances wherein he was most eminently our example, shall close this discourse.

1. His meekness, lowliness of mind, condescension unto all sorts of persons—his love and kindness unto mankind—his readiness to do good unto all, with patience and forbearance—are continually set before us in his example. I place them all under one head, as proceeding all from the same spring of divine goodness, and having effects of the same nature. With respect unto them, it is required that "the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus," Phil. ii. 5; and that we "walk in love, as he also loved us," Eph. v. 2.

In these things was he the great representative of the divine goodness unto us. In the acting of these graces on all occasions did he declare and manifest the nature of God, from whom he came. And this was one end of his exhibition in the flesh. Sin had filled the world with a representation of the devil and his nature, in mutual hatred, strife, variance, envy, wrath, pride, fierceness, and rage, against one another; all which are of the old murderer. The instances of a cured, of a contrary frame, were obscure and weak in the best of the saints of old. But in our Lord Jesus the light of the glory of God herein first shone upon the world. In the exercise of these graces, which he most abounded in, because the sins, weaknesses and infirmities of men gave continual occasion thereunto, did he represent the divine nature as love—as infinitely good, benign, merciful, and patient—as delighting in the exercise of these its holy properties.

In them was the Lord Christ our example in an especial manner. And they do in vain pretend to be his disciples, to be followers of him, who endeavour not to order the whole course of their lives in conformity unto him in these things.

One Christian who is meek, humble, kind, patient, and useful unto all; that condescends to the ignorance, weaknesses and infirmities of others; that passeth by provocations, injuries, contempt, with patience and with silence, unless where the glory and truth of God call for a just vindication; that pitieth all sorts of men in their failings and miscarriages, who is free from jealousies and evil surmises; that loveth what is good in all men, and all men even wherein they are not good, nor do good,—doth more express the virtues and excellencies of Christ than thousands can do with the most magnificent works of piety or charity, where this frame is wanting in them. For men to pretend to follow the example of Christ, and in the meantime to be proud, wrathful, envious, bitterly zealous, calling for fire from heaven to destroy men, or fetching it themselves from hell, is to cry, "Hail unto him," and to crucify him afresh unto their power.

2. Self-denial, readiness for the cross, with patience in sufferings, are the second sort of things which he calls all his disciples to follow his example in. It is the fundamental law of his Gospel, that if any one will be his disciple, "he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him." These things in him, as they are all of them summarily represented, Phil. ii. 5–8, by reason of the glory of his person and the nature of his sufferings, are quite of another kind than that we are called unto. But his grace in them all is our only pattern in what is required of us. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not," 1 Pet. ii. 21–23. Hence are we called to look unto "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame." For we are to "consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," that we faint not, Heb. xii. 3. Blessed be God for this example—for the glory of the condescension, patience, faith, and endurance, of Jesus Christ, in the extremity of all sorts of sufferings. This hath been the pole-star of the church in all its storms; the guide, the comfort, supportment and encouragement of all those holy souls, who, in their several generations, have in various degrees undergone persecution for righteousness' sake; and yet continueth so to be unto them who are in the same condition.

And I must say, as I have done on some other occasions in the handling of this subject, that a discourse on this one instance of the use of Christ in religion—from the consideration of the person who

suffered, and set us this example; of the principle from whence, and the end for which, he did it; of the variety of evils of all sorts he had to conflict withal; of his invincible patience under them all, and immovableness of love and compassion unto mankind, even his persecutors; the dolorous afflictive circumstances of his sufferings from God and men; the blessed efficacious workings of his faith and trust in God unto the uttermost; with the glorious issue of the whole, and the influence of all these considerations unto the consolation and supportment of the church—would take up more room and time than what is allotted unto the whole of that whereof it is here the least part. I shall leave the whole under the shade of that blessed promise, "If so be that we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together; for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 17, 18.

IV. The last thing proposed concerning the person of Christ, was the use of it unto believers, in the whole of their relation unto God and duty towards him. And the things belonging thereunto may be reduced unto these general heads:—

1. *Their sanctification*, which consisteth in these four things: (1.) The mortification of sin, (2.) The gradual renovation of our natures, (3.) Assistances in actual obedience, (4.) The same in temptations and trials.

2. *Their justification*, with its concomitants and consequents; as —(1.) Adoption, (2.) Peace, (3.) Consolation and joy in life and death, (4.) Spiritual gifts, unto the edification of themselves and others, (5.) A blessed resurrection, (6.) Eternal glory.

There are other things which also belong hereunto:—as their guidance in the course of their conversation in this world, direction unto usefulness in all states and conditions, patient waiting for the accomplishment of God's promises to the church, the communication of federal blessings unto their families, and the exercise of loving-kindness towards mankind in general, with sundry other concernments of the life of faith of the like importance; but they may be all reduced unto the general heads proposed.

What should have been spoken with reference unto these things belongs unto these three heads:—

1*st*, A declaration that all these things are wrought in and communicated unto believers, according to their various natures, by an *emanation of grace and power* from the person of Jesus Christ, as the head of the church—as he who is exalted and made a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

2*dly*, A declaration of the way and manner how believers do live

upon Christ in the exercise of faith, whereby, according to the promise and appointment of God, they derive from him the whole grace and mercy whereof in this world they are made partakers, and are established in the expectation of what they shall receive hereafter by his power. And that two things do hence ensue: (1*st*,) The necessity of universal evangelical obedience, seeing it is only in and by the duties of it that faith is, or can be, kept in a due exercise unto the ends mentioned. (2*dly*,) That believers do hereby increase continually with the increase of God, and grow up into him who is the head, until they become the fulness of him who filleth all in all.

3*dly*, A conviction that a real interest in, and participation of, these things cannot be obtained any other way but by the actual exercise of faith on the person of Jesus Christ.

These things were necessary to be handled at large with reference unto the end proposed. But, for sundry reasons, the whole of this labour is here declined. For some of the particulars mentioned I have already insisted on in other discourses heretofore published, and that with respect unto the end here designed. And this argument cannot be handled as it doth deserve, unto full satisfaction, without an entire discourse concerning the life of faith; which my present design will not admit of.

CHAPTER XVI.

An humble Inquiry into, and Prospect of, the infinite Wisdom of God, in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and the Way of Salvation thereby.

From the consideration of the things before insisted on, we may endeavour, according unto our measure, to take a view of, and humbly adore, the infinite wisdom of God, in the holy contrivance of this great "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." As it is a spiritual, evangelical mystery, it is an effect of divine wisdom, in the redemption and salvation of the church, unto the eternal glory of God; and as it is a "great mystery," so it is the mystery of the "manifold wisdom of God," Eph. iii. 9, 10—that is, of infinite wisdom working in great variety of actings and operations, suited unto, and expressive of, its own infinite fulness: for herein were "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" laid up, and laid out, Col. ii. 3. An argument this is, in some parts whereof divers of the ancient writers of the church have laboured, some occasionally, and some with express design. I shall insist only on those things which Scripture light leads us directly unto. The depths of divine wisdom in this glorious work are hid from the eyes of all living. "God [alone] understandeth the

way thereof; and he knoweth the place thereof;" as he speaks, Job xxviii. 21, 23. Yet is it so glorious in its effects, that "destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears," verse 22. The fame and report of this divine wisdom reach even unto hell. Those who eternally perish shall hear a fame of this wisdom, in the glorious effects of it towards the blessed souls above, though some of them would not believe it here in the light of the Gospel, and none of them can understand it there, in their everlasting darkness. Hence the report which they have of this wisdom is an aggravation of their misery.

These depths we may admire and adore, but we cannot comprehend: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord herein, or with whom took he counsel?" Concerning the original causes of his counsels in this great mystery we can only say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" This alone is left unto us in the way of duty, that in the effects of them we should contemplate on their excellency, so as to give glory to God, and live in a holy admiration of his wisdom and grace. For to give glory unto him, and admire him, is our present duty, until he shall come eternally "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10.

We can do no more but stand at the *shore of this ocean*, and adore its unsearchable depths. What is delivered from them by divine revelation we may receive as pearls of price, to enrich and adorn our souls. For "the secret things belong unto the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us," that we may do "the words of this law," Deut. xxix. 29. We shall not, therefore, in our inquiry into this great mystery, intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen, but only endeavour a right understanding of what is revealed concerning it. For the end of all divine revelations is our knowledge of the things revealed, with our obedience thereon; and unto this end things revealed do belong unto us.

Some things in general are to be premised unto our present inquiry.

1. We can have no view or due prospect of the wisdom of God in any of his works, much less in this of "sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," or the constitution of his person, and the work of redemption to be accomplished thereby, unless we consider also the interest of the other holy properties of the divine nature in them. Such are his holiness, his righteousness, his sovereign authority, his goodness, love, and grace.

There are three excellencies of the divine nature principally to be considered in all the external works of God. (1.) His *Goodness*, which is the communicative property thereof. This is the eternal

fountain and spring of all divine communications. Whatever is good in and unto any creature, is an emanation from divine goodness. "He is good, and he doeth good." That which acts originally in the divine nature, unto the communication of itself in any blessed or gracious effects unto the creatures, is goodness. (2.) *Wisdom*, which is the directive power or excellency of the divine nature. Hereby God guides, disposes, orders, and directs all things unto his own glory, in and by their own immediate proper ends, Prov. xvi. 4; Rev. iv. 11. (3.) *Power*, which is the effective excellency of the divine nature, effecting and accomplishing what wisdom doth design and order.

Whereas wisdom, therefore, is that holy excellency or power of the Divine Being, wherein God designs, and whereby he effects, the glory of all the other properties of his nature, we cannot trace the paths of it in any work of God, unless we know the interest and concernment of those other properties in that work. For that which wisdom principally designs, is the glorification of them. And unto this end the effective property of the divine nature, which is almighty power, always accompanies, or is subservient unto, the directive or infinite wisdom, which is requisite unto perfection in operation. What infinite goodness will communicate *ad extra*—what it will open the eternal fountain of the Divine Being and all-sufficiency to give forth—that infinite wisdom designs, contrives, and directs to the glory of God; and what wisdom so designs, infinite power effects. See Isa. xl. 13–15, 17, 28.

2. We can have no apprehensions of the interest of *the other properties* of the divine nature in this great mystery of godliness, whose glory was designed in infinite wisdom, without the consideration of *that state and condition of our own* wherein they are so concerned. That which was designed unto the eternal glory of God in this great work of the incarnation of his Son, was the redemption of mankind, or the recovery and salvation of the church. What hath been disputed by some concerning it, without respect unto the sin of man and the salvation of the church, is curiosity, and indeed presumptuous folly. The whole Scripture constantly assigneth this sole end of that effect of divine goodness and wisdom; yea, asserts it as the only foundation of the Gospel, John iii. 16. Wherefore, unto a due contemplation of divine wisdom in it, it is necessary we should consider what is the nature of sin, especially of that first sin, wherein our original apostasy from God did consist—what was the condition of mankind thereon—what is the concernment of the holy God therein, on the account of the blessed properties of his nature—what way was suited unto our recovery, that God might be glorified in them all. Without a previous consideration of these things, we can have no due conceptions of the wisdom of God in this glorious work which we inquire

after. Wherefore I shall so far speak of them, that, if it be the will of God, the minds of those who read and consider them may be opened and prepared to give admittance unto some rays of that divine wisdom in this glorious work, the lustre of whose full light we are not able in this world to behold.

When there was a visible pledge of the presence of God in the "bush that burned" and was not consumed, Moses said he "would turn aside to see that great sight," Exod. iii. 3. And this great representation of the glory of God being made and proposed unto us, it is certainly our duty to divert from all other occasions unto the contemplation of it. But as Moses was then commanded to put off his shoes, the place whereon he stood being holy ground, so it will be the wisdom of him that writes, and of them that read, to divest themselves of all carnal affections and imaginations, that they may draw nigh unto this great object of faith with due reverence and fear.

The first thing we are to consider, in order unto the end proposed, is—*the nature of our sin and apostasy from God.* For from thence we must learn the concernment of the divine excellencies of God in this work. And there are three things that were eminent therein:—

(1.) *A reflection* on the honour of the holiness and wisdom of God, in *the rejection of his image.* He had newly made man in his own image. And this work he so expresseth as to intimate a peculiar effect of divine wisdom in it, whereby it was distinguished from all other external works of creation whatever, Gen. i. 26, 27, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Nowhere is there such an emphasis of expression concerning any work of God. And sundry things are represented as peculiar therein.

[1*st*,] That the word of *consultation* and that of *execution* are distinct. In all other works of creation, the word of determination and execution was the same. When he created light—which seems to be the beauty and glory of the whole creation—he only said, "Let there be light; and there was light," Gen. i. 3. So was it with all other things. But when he comes unto the creation of man, another process is proposed unto our faith. These several words are distinct, not in time, but in nature. "God said, Let us make man in our image and likeness;" and thereon it is added distinctly, as the execution of that antecedent counsel, "So God made man in his own image." This puts a signal eminency on this work of God.

[2*dly*,] A distinct, peculiar concernment of *all the persons of the holy Trinity*, in their consultation and operation, is in like manner proposed unto us: "And God said, Let us make man." The truth hereof I have sufficiently evinced elsewhere, and discovered the vanity

of all other glosses and expositions. The properties of the divine nature principally and originally considerable, in all external operations, (as we have newly observed,) are goodness, wisdom, and power. In this great work, divine *goodness* exerted itself eminently and effectually in the person of the Father—the eternal fountain and spring, as of the divine nature, so of all divine operations. Divine *wisdom* acted itself peculiarly in the person of the Son; this being the principal notion thereof—the eternal Wisdom of the Father. Divine *power* wrought effectually in the person of the Holy Spirit; who is the immediate actor of all divine operations.

[3*dly*,] The proposition of the effecting this work, being by way of *consultation*, represents it a signal effect of infinite wisdom. These expressions are used to lead us unto the contemplation of that wisdom.

Thus, "God made man in his own image;" that is, in such a rectitude of nature as represented his righteousness and holiness—in such a state and condition as had a reflection on it of his *power* and *rule*. The former was the substance of it—the latter a necessary consequent thereof. This representation, I say, of God, in power and rule, was not that image of God wherein man was created, but a consequent of it. So the words and their order declare: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea," &c. Because he was made in the image of God, this dominion and rule were granted unto him. So fond is their imagination, who would have the image of God to consist solely in these things. Wherefore, the loss of the image of God was not originally the loss of power and dominion, or a right thereunto; but man was deprived of that right, on the loss of that image which it was granted unto. Wherein it did consist, see Eccles. vii. 29; Eph. iv. 24.

Three things God designed in this communication of his image unto our nature, which were his principal ends in the creation of all things here below; and therefore was divine wisdom more eminently exerted therein than in all the other works of this inferior creation.

The *first* was, that he might therein make a *representation of his holiness and righteousness* among his creatures. This was not done in any other of them. Characters they had on them of his goodness, wisdom, and power. In these things the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work." His eternal power and Godhead are manifest in the things that are made; but none of them, not the whole fabric of heaven and earth, with all their glorious ornaments and endowments, were either fit or able to receive any impressions of his holiness and righteousness—of any of the moral perfections or universal rectitude of his nature. Yet, in the demonstration and representation of these things doth *the glory of God* principally consist. Without them, he could not be known

and glorified as God. Wherefore he would have an image and representation of them in the creation here below. And this he will always have, so long as he will be worshipped by any of his creatures. And therefore, when it was lost in Adam, it was renewed in Christ, as hath been declared.

The *second* was, that it might be a means of rendering actual glory unto him from all other parts of the creation. Without this, which is as the animating life and form of the whole, the other creatures are but as a dead thing. They could not any way declare the glory of God, but passively and objectively. They were as an harmonious, well-tuned instrument, which gives no sound unless there be a skilful hand to move and act it. What is light, if there be no eye to see it? or what is music, if there be no ear to hear it? How glorious and beautiful soever any of the works of creation appear to be, from impressions of divine power, wisdom, and goodness on them; yet, without this *image of God* in man, there was nothing here below to understand God in them—to glorify God by them. This alone is that whereby, in a way of admiration, obedience, and praise, we were enabled to render unto God all the glory which he designed from those works of his power.

The *third* was, that it might be a means to bring man unto that *eternal enjoyment* of Himself, which he was fitted for and designed unto. For this was to be done in a way of obedience;—"Do this and live," was that rule of it which the nature of God and man, with their mutual relation unto one another, did require. But we were made *meet* for this obedience, and enabled unto it, only by virtue of this *image of God* implanted in our natures. It was morally a power to live unto God in obedience, that we might come to the enjoyment of him in glory.

Evident it is that these were the principal ends of God in the creation of all things. Wherefore this constitution of our nature, and the furnishment of it with the *image of* God, was the most eminent effect of *infinite wisdom* in all the outward works of the divine nature.

(2.) In the entrance of sin, and by apostasy from God, man voluntarily rejected and defaced this *blessed representation of the righteousness and holiness of God*—this great effect of his goodness and wisdom, in its tendency unto his eternal glory, and our enjoyment of him. No greater dishonour could be done unto him—no endeavour could have been more pernicious in casting contempt on his counsel. For as his holiness, which was represented in that image, was despoiled, so we did what lay in us to defeat the contrivance of his wisdom. This will be evident by reflecting on the ends of it now mentioned. For—

[1.] Hereon there remained nothing, in all the creation here below,

whereby any representation might be made of God's holiness and righteousness, or any of the moral perfections of his nature. How could it be done, this image being lost out of the world? The brute, inanimate part of the creation, however stupendously great in its matter and glorious in its outward form, was no way capable of it. The nature of man under the loss of this image—fallen, depraved, polluted, and corrupted—gives rather a representation and image of Satan than of God. Hence—instead of goodness, love, righteousness, holiness, peace, all virtues usefully communicative and effective of the good of the whole race of mankind, which would have been effects of this image of God, and representatives of his nature—the whole world, from and by the nature of man, is filled with envy, malice, revenge, cruelty, oppression, and all engines of promoting self, whereunto man is wholly turned, as fallen off from God. He that would learn the divine nature, from the representation that is made of it in the present actings of the nature of man, will be gradually led unto the devil instead of God. Wherefore no greater indignity could be offered unto divine wisdom and holiness, than there was in this rejection of the image of God wherein we were created.

[2.] There was no way left whereby glory might redound unto God from the remainder of the creation here below. For *the nature of man alone* was designed to be the way and means of it, by virtue of the image of God implanted on it. Wherefore man by sin did not only draw off himself from that relation unto God wherein he was made, but drew off the whole creation here below with himself into a uselessness unto his glory. And upon the entrance of sin, before the cure of our apostasy was actually accomplished, the generality of mankind divided the creatures into two sorts—those above, or the heavenly bodies, and those here below. Those of the first sort they worshipped as their gods; and those of the other sort they abused unto their lusts. Wherefore God was every way dishonoured in and by them all, nor was there any glory given him on their account. What some attempted to do of that nature, in a wisdom of their own, ended in folly and a renewed dishonour of God; as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 18, 19, 21, 22.

[3.] Man hereby lost all *power and ability* of attaining that end for which he was made—namely, the eternal enjoyment of God. Upon the matter, and as much as in us lay, the whole end of God in the creation of all things here below was utterly defeated.

But that which was the malignity and poison of this sin, was the contempt that was cast on the *holiness of God*, whose *representation*, and all its *express characters*, were utterly despised and rejected therein. Herein, then, lay the concernment of the holiness or righteousness of God in this sin of our nature, which we are inquiring after. Unless

some reparation be made for the indignity cast upon it in the rejection of the image and representation of it—unless there be some way whereby it may be more eminently exalted in the nature of man than it was debased and despised in the same nature; it was just, equal, righteous with God—that which becomes the rectitude and purity of his nature—that mankind should perish eternally in that condition whereinto it was cast by sin.

It was not, therefore, consistent with the glory of God, that mankind should be restored, that this nature of ours should be brought unto the enjoyment of him, unless his holiness be more exalted, be more conspicuously represented in the same nature, than ever it was depressed or despised thereby. The demonstration of its glory in any other nature, as in that of angels, would not serve unto this end; as we shall see afterward.

We must now a little return unto what we before laid down. Wisdom being the directive power of all divine operations, and the end of all those operations being the glory of God himself, or the demonstration of the excellencies of the holy properties of his nature, it was incumbent thereon to provide for the honour and glory of divine holiness in an exaltation answerable unto the attempt for its debasement. Without the consideration hereof, we can have no due prospect of the actings of infinite wisdom in this great work of our redemption and recovery by the incarnation of the Son of God.

(3.) Sin brought *disorder* and *disturbance* into the whole rule and government of God. It was necessary, from the infinite wisdom of God, that all things should be made in perfect order and harmony—all in a direct subordination unto his glory. There could have been no original defect in the natural or moral order of things, but it must have proceeded from a defect in wisdom; for the disposal of all things into their proper order belonged unto the contrivance thereof. And the harmony of all things among themselves, with all their mutual relations and aspects, in a regular tendency unto their proper and utmost end—whereby though every individual subsistence or being hath a peculiar end of its own, yet all their actings and all their ends tend directly unto one utmost common end of them all—is the principal effect of wisdom. And thus was it at the beginning, when God himself beheld the universe, and, "lo, it was exceeding good."

All things being thus created and stated, it belonged unto the nature of God to be the rector and disposer of them all.

It was not a mere free act of his will, whereby God chose to rule and govern the creation according unto the law of the nature of all things, and their relation unto him; but it was necessary, from his divine being and excellencies, that so he should do. Wherefore, it concerned both the wisdom and righteousness of God to take care that

either all things should be preserved in the state wherein they were created, and no disorder be suffered to enter into the kingdom and rule of God, or that, in a way suited unto them, his glory should be retrieved and re-established; for God is not the God of confusion—neither the author nor approver of it—neither in his works nor in his rule. But sin actually brought disorder into the kingdom and rule of God. And this it did not in any one particular instance, but that which was universal as unto all things here below. For the original harmony and order of all things consisted in their subordination unto the glory of God. But this they all lost, as was before declared. Hence he who looked on them in their constitution, and, to manifest his complacency in them, affirmed them to be "exceeding good," immediately on the entrance of sin, pronounced a curse on the whole earth, and all things contained therein.

To suffer this disorder to continue unrectified, was not consistent with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It would make the kingdom of God to be like that of Satan—full of darkness and confusion. Nothing is more necessary unto the good of the universe, and without which it were better it were annihilated, than the preservation of the honour of God in his government. And this could no otherwise be done, but by the infliction of a punishment proportionable in justice unto the demerit of sin. Some think this might be done by a free dismission of sin, or a passing it over without any punishment at all. But what evidence should we then have that good and evil were not alike, and almost equal unto God in his rule—that he doth not like sin as well as uprightness? Nor would this supposition leave any grounds of exercising justice among men. For if God, in his rule of all things, dismissed the greatest sin without any penalty inflicted, what reason have we to judge that evils among ourselves should at all be punished? That, therefore, be far from God, that the righteous should be as the wicked: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Wherefore, the order of God's rule being broken, as it consisted in the regular obedience of the creature, and disorder with confusion being brought thereby into the kingdom and government of God; his righteousness, as it is the rectorial virtue and power of the divine nature, required that his glory should be restored, by reducing the sinning creature again into order by punishment. Justice, therefore, must be answered and complied withal herein, according unto its eternal and unanswerable law, in a way suited unto the glory of God, or the sinning creature must perish eternally.

Herein the righteousness of God, as the rectorial virtue of the divine nature, was concerned in the sin and apostasy of men. The vindication and glory of it—to provide that in nothing it were eclipsed or

diminished—was incumbent on infinite wisdom, according unto the rule before laid down. That must direct and dispose of all things anew unto the glory of the righteousness of God, or there is no recovery of mankind. And in our inquiry after the impressions of divine wisdom on the great and glorious means of our restoration under consideration, this provision made thereby for the righteousness of God, in his rule and government of all, is greatly to be attended to.

(4.) Man by sin *put himself into the power of the devil*, God's greatest adversary. The devil had newly, by rebellion and apostasy from his first condition, cast himself under the eternal displeasure and wrath of God. God had righteously purposed in himself *not to spare him*, nor contrive any way for his deliverance unto eternity. He, on the other side, was become obdurate in his malice and hatred of God, designing his dishonour and the impeachment of his glory with the utmost of his remaining abilities. In this state of things, man voluntarily leaves the rule and conduct of God, with all his dependence upon him, and puts himself into the power of the devil; for he believed Satan above God—that is, placed his faith and confidence in him, as unto the way of attaining blessedness and true happiness. And in whom we place our trust and confidence, them do we obey, whatever we profess. Herein did God's adversary seem for a season to triumph against him, as if he had defeated the great design of his goodness, wisdom, and power. So he would have continued to do, if no way had been provided for his disappointment.

This, therefore, also belonged unto the *care of divine wisdom*, —namely, that the glory of God in none of the holy properties of his nature did suffer any diminution hereby.

All this, and inconceivably more than we are able to express, being contained in the sin of our apostasy from God, it must needs follow that the condition of all mankind became thereby inexpressibly evil. As we had done all the moral evil which our nature was capable to act, so it was meet we should receive all the penal evil which our nature was capable to undergo; and it all issued in death temporal and eternal, inflicted from the wrath of God.

This is the first thing to be considered in our tracing the footsteps of divine wisdom in our deliverance by the incarnation of the Son of God. Without due conceptions of the nature of this sin and apostasy —of the provocation given unto God thereby, of the injury attempted to be done unto the glory of all his properties, of his concernment in their reparation, with the unspeakable misery that mankind was fallen into—we cannot have the least view of the glorious actings of divine wisdom in our deliverance by Christ; and, therefore, the most of those who are insensible of these things, do wholly reject the principal instances of infinite wisdom in our redemption; as we shall yet

see farther afterward. And the great reason why the glory of God in Christ doth so little irradiate the minds of many, that it is so much neglected and despised, is because they are not acquainted nor affected with the nature of our first sin and apostasy, neither in itself nor its woful effects and consequents.

But, on the supposition of these things, a double inquiry ariseth with reference unto the wisdom of God, and the other holy properties of his nature immediately concerned in our sin and apostasy.

1. Whereas man by sin had defaced the image of God, and lost it, whereby there was no representation of his holiness and righteousness left in the whole creation here below—no way of rendering any glory to him, in, for, or by, any other of his works—no means to bring man unto the enjoyment of God, for which he was made;—and whereas he had brought confusion and disorder into the rule and kingdom of God, which, according unto the law of creation and its sanction, could not be rectified but by the eternal ruin of the sinner; and had, moreover, given up himself unto the rule and conduct of Satan:—whether, I say, hereon it was meet, with respect unto the holy properties of the divine nature, that all mankind should be left eternally in this condition, without remedy or relief? or whether there were not a condecency and suitableness unto them, that at least our nature in some portion of it should be restored?

2. Upon a supposition that the granting of a recovery was suited unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, acting themselves by infinite wisdom, what rays of that wisdom may we discern in the finding out and constitution of the way and means of that recovery?

The first of these I shall speak briefly unto in this place, because I have treated more largely concerning it in another. For there are many things which argue a condecency unto the divine perfections herein—namely, that mankind should not be left utterly remediless in that guilt of misery whereinto it was plunged. I shall at present only insist on one of them.

God had originally created two sorts of intellectual creatures, capable of the eternal enjoyment of himself—namely, angels and men. That he would so make either sort or both, was a mere effect of his sovereign wisdom and pleasure; but on a supposition that he would so make them, they must be made for his glory. These two sorts thus created he placed in several habitations, prepared for them, suitable unto their natures and the present duties required of them; the angels in heaven above, and men on earth below. Sin first invaded the nature of angels, and cast innumerable multitudes of them out of their primitive condition. Hereby they lost their capacity of, and right unto, that enjoyment of God which their nature was prepared and made meet for; neither would God ever restore them thereunto.

And in the instance of dealing with them, when he "spared them not, but shut them up in chains of everlasting darkness unto the judgment of the great day," he manifested how righteous it was to leave sinning, apostate creatures in everlasting misery. If anything of relief be provided for any of them, it is a mere effect of sovereign grace and wisdom, whereunto God was no way obliged. Howbeit, *the whole angelical nature*, that was created in a capacity for the eternal enjoyment of God, perished not; nor doth it seem consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, that the whole entire species or kind of creatures made capable of glory in the eternal enjoyment of him, should at once immediately be excluded from it. That such a thing should fall out as it were accidentally, without divine provision and disposal, would argue a defect in wisdom, and a possibility of a surprisal into the loss of the whole glory he designed in the creation of all things; and to have it a mere effect of divine ordination and disposal, is as little consistent with his goodness. Wherefore, the same nature which sinned and perished in the angels that fell, abideth in the enjoyment of God in those myriads of blessed spirits which "left not their first habitation."

The *nature of man* was in like manner made capable of the eternal enjoyment of God. This was the end for which it was created, unto the glory of him by whom it was made; for it became the divine wisdom and goodness, to give unto everything an operation and end suited unto its capacity. And these, in this race of intellectual creatures, were to live unto God, and to come unto the eternal enjoyment of him. This operation and end their nature being capable of, they being suited unto it, unto them it was designed. But sin entered them also; we also "sinned, and came short of the glory of God." The inquiry hereon is, whether it became the divine goodness and wisdom that this whole nature, in all that were partakers of it, should fail and come short of that end for which alone it was made of God? For whereas the angels stood, in their primitive condition, every one in his own individual person, the sin of some did not prejudice others, who did not sin actually themselves. But the whole race of mankind stood all in one common head and state; from whom they were to be educed and derived by natural generation. The sin and apostasy of that one person was the sin and apostasy of us all. *In him all sinned and died.* Wherefore, unless there be a recovery made of them, or of some from among them, that whole species of intellectual nature—the whole kind of it, in all its individuals—which was made capable of doing the will of God, so as to come unto the eternal fruition of him, must be eternally lost and excluded from it. This, we may say, became not the wisdom and goodness of God, no more than it would have done to have suffered the whole angelical nature, in all its indi-

viduals, to have perished for ever. No created understanding could have been able to discern the glory of God in such a dispensation, whereby it would have had no glory. That the whole nature, in all the individuals of it, which was framed by the power of God out of nothing, and made what it was for this very end, that it might glorify him, and come unto the enjoyment of him, should eternally perish, if any way of relief for any portion of it were possible unto infinite wisdom, doth not give an amiable representation of the divine excellencies unto us.

It was therefore left on the provision of infinite wisdom, that this great effect, of recovering a portion of fallen mankind out of this miserable estate, wherein there was a suitableness, a condecency unto the divine excellencies, should be produced; only, it was to be done on and by a free act of the will of God; for otherwise there was no obligation on him from any of his properties so to do.

But it may be yet said, on the other side, that the nature of man was so defiled, so depraved, so corrupted, so alienated and separated from God, so obnoxious unto the curse by its sin and apostasy, that it was not reparable to the glory of God; and therefore it would not argue any defect in divine power, nor any unsuitableness unto divine wisdom and goodness, if it were not actually repaired and restored. I answer two things.

(1.) The horrible nature of the first sin, and the heinousness of our apostasy from God therein, were such and so great, as that God thereon might righteously, and suitably unto all the holy properties of his nature, leave mankind to perish eternally in that condition whereinto they had cast themselves; and if he had utterly forsaken the whole race of mankind in that condition, and left them all as remediless as the fallen angels, there could have been no reflection on his goodness, and an evident suitableness unto his justice and holiness. Wherefore, wherever there is any mention in the Scripture of the redemption or restoration of mankind, it is constantly proposed as an effect of mere sovereign grace and mercy. See Eph. i. 3–11. And those who pretend a great difficulty at present, in the reconciliation of the eternal perishing of the greatest part of mankind with those notions we have of the divine goodness, seem not to have sufficiently considered what was contained in our original apostasy from God, nor the righteousness of God in dealing with the angels that sinned. For when man had voluntarily broken all the relation of love and moral good between God and him, had defaced his image—the only representation of his holiness and righteousness in this lower world—and deprived him of all his glory from the works of his hands, and had put himself into the society and under the conduct of the devil; what dishonour could it have been unto God, what diminution would

there have been of his glory, if he had left him unto his own choice —to eat for ever of the fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices unto eternity? It is only infinite wisdom that could find out a way for the salvation of any one of the whole race of mankind, so as that it might be reconciled unto the glory of his holiness, righteousness, and rule. Wherefore, as we ought always to admire *sovereign grace* in the *few* that shall be saved, so we have no ground to reflect on divine goodness in the *multitudes* that perish, especially considering that they all voluntarily continue in their sin and apostasy.

(2.) I grant the nature of man was not reparable nor recoverable by any such actings of the properties of God as he had exerted in the creation and rule of all things. Were there not other properties of the divine nature than what were discovered and revealed in the creation of all—were not some of them so declared capable of an exercise in another way or in higher degrees than what had as yet been instanced in—it must be acknowledged that the reparation of mankind could not be conceived compliant with the divine excellencies, nor to be effected by them. I shall give one instance in each sort; namely, first in properties of another kind than any which had been manifested in the works of creation, and then the actings of some of them so manifested, in another way, or farther degree than what they were before exerted in or by.

[1.] Of the first sort are *love*, *grace*, and *mercy*, which I refer unto one head—their nature being the same, as they have respect unto sinners. For although these were none of them manifested in the works of creation, yet are they no less essential properties of the divine nature than either power, goodness, or wisdom. With these it was that the reparation of our nature was compliant—unto them it had a condecency; and the glory of them infinite wisdom designed therein. That wisdom, on which it is incumbent to provide for the manifestation of all the other properties of God's nature, contrived this work unto the glory of his love, mercy, and grace; as in the Gospel it is everywhere declared.

[2.] Of the second sort is *divine goodness*. This, as the communicative property of the divine nature, had exerted itself in the creation of all things. Howbeit, it had not done so perfectly—it had not done so to the uttermost. But the nature of goodness being communicative, it belongs unto its perfection to act itself unto the uttermost. This it had not yet done in the creation. Therein "God made man," and acted his goodness in the communication of our being unto us, with all its endowments. But there yet remained another effect of it; which was, *that God should be made man*, as the way unto, and the means of, our recovery.

These things being premised, we proceed to inquire more particu-

larly by what way and means the recovery of mankind might be wrought, so as that God might be glorified thereby.

If fallen man be restored and reinstated in his primitive condition, or brought into a better, it must either be by himself, or by some other undertaking for him; for it must be done by some means or other. So great an alteration in the whole state of things was made by the entrance of sin, that it was not consistent with the glory of any of the divine excellencies that a restoration of all things should be made by a mere act of power, without the use of any means for the removal of the cause of that alteration. That man himself could not be this means—that is, that he could not restore himself—is openly evident. Two ways there were whereby he might attempt it, and neither jointly nor severally could he do anything in them.

1. He might do it by returning unto obedience unto God on his own accord. He fell off from God on his own accord by disobedience, through the suggestion of Satan; wherefore, a voluntary return unto his former obedience would seem to reduce all things unto their first estate. But this way was both impossible, and, upon a supposition of it, would have been insufficient unto the end designed. For—

(1.) This he *could not do.* He had, by his sin and fall, lost that power whereby he was able to yield any acceptable obedience unto God; and a return unto obedience is an act of greater power than a persistency in the way and course of it, and more is required thereunto. But all man's original power of obedience consisted in the image of God. This he had defaced in himself, and deprived himself of. Having, therefore, lost that power which should have enabled him to live unto God in his primitive condition, he could not retain a greater power in the same kind to return thereunto. This, indeed, was that which Satan deceived and deluded him withal; namely, that by his disobedience he should acquire new light and power, which he had not yet received—he should be "like unto God." But he was so far from any advantage by his apostasy, that one part of his misery consisted in the loss of all power or ability to live to God.

This is the folly of that Pelagian heresy, which is now a *third time* attempting to impose itself on the Christian world. It supposeth that men have a power of their own to return unto God, after they had lost the power they had of abiding with him. It is not, indeed, as yet, pretended by many that the first sin was a mere transient act, that no way vitiated our nature, or impaired the power, faculty, or principle of obedience in us. A wound, they say, a disease, a weakness, it brought upon us, and rendered us *legally* obnoxious unto death temporal, which we were *naturally* liable unto before. Wherefore, it is not said that men can return unto that perfect obedience which the law required; but that they can comply with and perform

that which the Gospel requireth in the room thereof. For they seem to suppose that the Gospel is not much more but an accommodation of the rule of obedience unto our present reason and abilities, with some motives unto it, and an example for it in the personal obedience and suffering of Christ. For whereas man forsook the law of obedience first prescribed unto him, and fell into various incapacities of observing it, God did not, as they suppose, provide, in and by the Gospel, a righteousness whereby the law might be fulfilled, and effectual grace to raise up the nature of man unto the performance of acceptable obedience; but only brings down the law and the rule of it into a compliance unto our weakened, diseased, depraved nature;—than which, if anything can be spoken more *dishonourably of the Gospel*, I know it not. However, this pretended power of returning unto some kind of obedience, but not that which was required of us in our primitive condition, is no way sufficient unto our restoration; as is evident unto all.

(2.) As man *could not* effect his own recovery, so he *would not* attempt it. For he was fallen into that condition wherein, in the principles of all his moral operations, he was at enmity against God; and whatever did befall him, he would choose to continue in his state of apostasy; for he was wholly "alienated from the life of God." He likes it not, as that which is incompliant with his dispositions, inclinations, and desires—as inconsistent with everything wherein he placeth his interest. And hence, as he *cannot do* what he should through *impotency*, he *will not do* even what he can through *obstinacy*. It may be, we know not distinctly what to ascribe unto man's impotency, and what unto his obstinacy; but between both, he neither can nor will return unto God. And his power unto good, though not sufficient to bring him again unto God, yet is it not so small but that he always chooseth not to make use of it unto that end. In brief, there was left in man a fear of divine power—a fear of God because of his greatness—which makes him do many things which otherwise he would not do; but there is not left in him any love unto divine goodness, without which he cannot choose to return unto God.

(3.) But let us leave these things which men will dispute about, though in express contradiction unto the Scripture and the experience of them that are wrought upon to believe; and let us make an impossible supposition—that man could and would return unto his primitive obedience; yet no reparation of the glory of God, suffering in the loss of the former state of all things, would thereon ensue. What satisfaction would be hereby made for the injury offered unto the holiness, righteousness, and wisdom of God, whose violation in their blessed effects was the principal evil of sin? Notwithstanding such a supposition, all the disorder that was brought into the rule and government

of God by sin, with the reflection of dishonour upon him, in the rejection of his image, would still continue. And such a restitution of things, wherein no provision is made for the reparation of the glory of God, is not to be admitted. The notion of it may possibly please men in their apostate condition, wherein they are wholly turned off from God, and into self—not caring what becomes of his glory, so it may go well with themselves; but it is highly contradictory unto all equity, justice, and the whole reason of things, wherein the glory of God is the principal and centre of all.

Practically, things are otherwise among many. The most profligate sinners in the world, that have a conviction of an eternal condition, would be saved. Tell them it is inconsistent with the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and truth of God, to save unbelieving, impenitent sinners—they are not concerned in it. Let them be saved —that is, eternally delivered from the evil they fear—and let God look unto his own glory; they take no care about it. A soul that is spiritually ingenuous, would not be saved in any way but that whereby God may be glorified. Indeed, to be saved, and not unto the glory of God, implies a contradiction ; for our salvation is eternal blessedness, in a participation of the glory of God.

Secondly, It followeth, therefore, that man must make *satisfaction* unto the justice of God, and thereby a reparation of his glory, that he may be saved. This, added unto a complete return unto obedience, would effect a restitution of all things; it would do so as unto what was past, though it would make no new addition of glory unto God. But this became not the nature and efficacy of divine wisdom. It became it not merely to retrieve what was past, without a new manifestation and exaltation of the divine excellencies. And therefore, *in our restitution by Christ,* there is such a manifestation and exaltation of the divine properties as incomparably exceeds whatever could have ensued on, or been effected by, the law of creation, had man continued in his original obedience. But at present it is granted that this *addition of satisfaction* unto a *return unto obedience,* would restore all things unto their first condition. But as that *return* was impossible unto man, so was this *satisfaction* for the injury done by sin much more. For suppose a mere creature, such as man is, such as all men are, in what condition you please, and under all advantageous circumstances, yet, whatever he can do towards God is antecedently and absolutely due from him in that instant wherein he doth it, and that in the manner wherein it is done. They must all say, when they have done all that they can do, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what was our duty." Wherefore, it is impossible that, by anything a man can do well, he should make satisfaction for anything he hath done ill. For what he so doth is due in

and for itself; and to suppose that satisfaction will be made for a former fault by that whose omission would have been another, had the former never been committed, is madness. An old debt cannot be discharged with ready money for new commodities; nor can past injuries be compensated by present duties, which we are anew obliged unto. Wherefore—mankind being indispensably and eternally obliged unto the present performance of all duties of obedience unto God, according to the utmost of their capacity and ability, so as that the non-performance of them in their season, both as unto their matter and manner, would be their sin—it is utterly impossible that by anything, or all that they can do, they should make the least satisfaction unto God for anything they have done against him; much less for the horrible apostasy whereof we treat. And to attempt the same end by any way which God hath not appointed, which he hath not made their duty, is a new provocation of the highest nature. See Micah vi. 6–8.

It is therefore evident, on all these considerations, that all mankind, as unto any endeavours of their own, anything that can be fancied as possible for them to design or do, must be left irreparable, in a condition of eternal misery. And unless we have a full conviction hereof, we can neither admire nor entertain the mystery of the wisdom of God in our reparation. And therefore it hath been the design of Satan, in all ages, to contrive presumptuous notions of men's spiritual abilities—to divert their minds from the contemplation of the glory of divine wisdom and grace, as alone exalted in our recovery.

We are proceeding on this supposition, that there was a condecency unto the holy perfections of the divine nature, that mankind should be restored, or some portion of it recovered unto the enjoyment of himself; so angelical nature was preserved unto the same end in those that did not sin. And we have showed the general grounds whereon it is impossible that fallen man should restore or recover himself. Wherefore we must, in the next place, inquire what is necessary unto such a restoration, on the account of that concernment of the divine excellencies in the sin and apostasy of man which we have stated before; for hereby we may obtain light, and an insight into the glory of that wisdom whereby it was contrived and effected. And the things following, among others, may be observed under that end:—

1. It was required that there should be an *obedience* yielded unto God, bringing more glory unto him than dishonour did arise and accrue from the disobedience of man This was due unto the glory of divine holiness in giving of the law. Until this was done, the excellency of the law, as becoming the holiness of God, and as an effect thereof, could not be made manifest. For if it were never kept in any instance, never fulfilled by any one person in the world, how should the glory of it be declared?—how should the holiness of God

be represented by it?—how should it be evident that the transgression of it was not rather from some defect in the law itself, than from any evil in them that should have yielded obedience unto it? The obedience yielded by the angels that stood and sinned not, made it manifest that the transgression of it by them that fell and sinned was from their own wills, and not from any unsuitableness unto their nature and state in the law itself. But if the law given unto man should never be complied withal in perfect obedience by any one whatever, it might be thought that the law itself was unsuited unto our nature, and impossible to be complied withal. Nor did it become *infinite wisdom* to give a law whose equity, righteousness, and holiness, should never be exemplified in *obedience*—should never be made to appear but in the punishment inflicted on its transgressors. Wherefore the original law of personal righteousness was not given solely nor primarily that *men might suffer justly* for its transgression, but that *God might be glorified* in its accomplishment. If this be not done, it is impossible that men should be restored unto the glory of God. If the law be not fulfilled by obedience, man must suffer evermore for his disobedience, or God must lose the manifestation of his holiness therein. Besides, God had represented his holiness in that image of it which was implanted on our nature, and which was the principle enabling us unto obedience. This also was rejected by sin, and therein the holiness of God despised. If this be not restored in our nature, and that with advantages above what it had in its first communication, we cannot be recovered unto the glory of God.

2. It was necessary that the *disorder* brought into the rule and government of God by sin and rebellion should be rectified. This could no otherwise be done but by the infliction of that punishment which, in the unalterable rule and standard of divine justice, was due thereunto. The dismission of sin on any other terms would leave the rule of God under unspeakable dishonour and confusion; for where is the righteousness of government, if the highest sin and provocation that our nature was capable of, and which brought confusion on the whole creation below, should for ever go unpunished? The first express intimation that God gave of his righteousness in the government of mankind, was his threatening a punishment equal unto the demerit of disobedience, if man should fall into it: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." If he revoke and disannul this sentence, how shall the glory of his righteousness in the rule of all be made known? But how this punishment should be undergone, which consisted in *man's eternal ruin*, and yet man be *eternally saved*, was a work for divine wisdom to contrive. This, therefore, was necessary unto the honour of God's righteousness, as he is the supreme Governor and Judge of all the earth.

3. It was necessary that *Satan* should be *justly* despoiled of his advantage and power over mankind, unto the glory of God; for he was not to be left to triumph in his success. And inasmuch as man was, on his part, rightfully given up unto him, his deliverance was not to be wrought by an act of absolute dominion and power, but in a way of justice and lawful judgment; which things shall be afterward spoken unto.

Without these things the recovery of mankind into the favour and unto the enjoyment of God was utterly impossible, on the account of the concernment of the glory of his divine perfections in our sin and apostasy.

How all this might be effected—how the glory of the holiness and righteousness of God in his law and rule, and in the primitive constitution of our nature, might be repaired—how his goodness, love, grace, and mercy, might be manifested and exalted in this work of the reparation of mankind—was left unto the care and contrivance of infinite wisdom. From the eternal springs thereof must this work arise, or cease for ever.

To trace some of the footsteps of divine wisdom herein, in and from the revelation of it by its effects, is that which lieth before us. And sundry things appear to have been necessary hereunto. As—

1. That all things required unto our restoration, the whole work wherein they consist, must be *wrought in our own nature*—in the nature that had sinned, and which was to be restored and brought unto glory. On supposition, I say, of the salvation of our nature, no satisfaction can be made unto the glory of God for the sin of that nature, but in the nature itself that sinned and is to be saved. For whereas God gave the law unto man as an effect of his wisdom and holiness, which he transgressed in his disobedience, wherein could the glory of them or either of them be exalted, if the same law were complied withal and fulfilled in and by a nature of another kind—suppose that of angels? For, notwithstanding any such obedience, yet the law might be unsuited unto the nature of man, whereunto it was originally prescribed. Wherefore, there would be a veil drawn over the glory of God in *giving the law* unto man, if it were not fulfilled by obedience in the *same nature;* nor can there be any such relation between the obedience and sufferings of one nature in the stead and for the disobedience of another, as that glory might ensue unto the wisdom, holiness, and justice of God, in the deliverance of that other nature thereon.

The Scripture abounds in the declaration of the necessity hereof, with its condecency unto divine wisdom. Speaking of the way of our relief and recovery, "Verily," saith the apostle, "he took not on him the nature of angels," Heb. ii. 16. Had it been the recovery of angels

which he designed, he would have taken their nature on him. But this would have been no relief at all unto us, no more than the assuming of our nature is of advantage unto the fallen angels. The obedience and sufferings of Christ therein extended not at all unto them—nor was it just or equal that they should be relieved thereby. What, then, was required unto our deliverance? Why, saith he, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," verse 14. It was human nature (here expressed by flesh and blood) that was to be delivered; and therefore it was human nature wherein this deliverance was to be wrought. This the same apostle disputes at large, Rom. v. 12–19. The sum is, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one" (of one man, Jesus Christ, verse 15) "are many made righteous." The same nature that sinned must work out the reparation and recovery from sin. So he affirms again, 1 Cor. xv. 21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." No otherwise could our ruin be retrieved, nor our deliverance from sin with all the consequents of it be effected,—which came by *man*, which were committed and deserved in and by our nature,—but by *man*, by one of the same nature with us. This, therefore, in the first place, became the wisdom of God, that the work of deliverance should be wrought in our own nature,—in the nature that had sinned.

2. That part of human nature wherein or whereby this work was to be effected, as unto the essence or substance of it, was to be *derived from the common root* or stock of the same nature, in our first parents. It would not suffice hereunto that God should create a man, out of the dust of the earth or out of nothing, of the same nature in general with ourselves; for there would be no cognation or alliance between him and us, so that we should be any way concerned in what he did or suffered: for this alliance depends solely hereon, that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men," Acts xvii. 26. Hence it is that the genealogy of Christ is given us in the Gospel—not only from Abraham, to declare the faithfulness of God in the promise that he should be of his seed, but from Adam also, to manifest his relation unto the common stock of our nature, and unto all mankind therein.

The first discovery of the wisdom of God herein was in that primitive revelation, that the Deliverer should be of "the seed of the woman," Gen. iii. 15. No other but he who was so could "break the serpent's head," or "destroy the work of the devil," so as that we might be delivered and restored. He was not only to be partaker of our nature, but he was so to be, by being "the seed of the woman," Gal. iv. 4. He was not to be created out of nothing, nor to be made of the dust of the earth, but so "made of a woman," as that thereby

he might receive our nature from the common root and spring of it. Thus "he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," Heb. ii.11,—ἐξ ἑνὸς; that is, φυράματος—of the same mass, of one nature and blood; whence he is not ashamed to call them brethren. This also was to be brought forth from the treasures of infinite wisdom.

3. This nature of ours, wherein the work of our recovery and salvation is to be wrought and performed, was not to be so derived from the original stock of our kind or race as to bring along with it the *same taint of sin*, and the same *liableness unto guilt*, upon its own account, as accompany every other individual person in the world; for, as the apostle speaks, "such a high priest became us" (and as a high priest was he to accomplish this work) "as was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." For, if this nature in him were so *defiled* as it is in us—if it were under a deprivation of the image of God, as it is in our persons before our renovation—it could do nothing that should be acceptable unto him. And if it were *subject unto* guilt on its own account, it could make no satisfaction for the sin of others. Here, therefore, again occurs *dignus vindice nodus*—a difficulty which nothing but divine wisdom could expedite.

To take a little farther view hereof, we must consider on what grounds these things (spiritual defilement and guilt) do adhere unto our nature, as they are in all our individual persons. And the first of these is—that our entire nature, as unto our participation of it, was in Adam, as our head and representative. Hence his sin became the sin of us all—is justly imputed unto us and charged on us. *In him we all sinned;* all did so who were in him as their common representative when he sinned. Hereby we became the natural "children of wrath," or liable unto the wrath of God for the common sin of our nature, in the natural and legal head or spring of it. And the other is—that we derive our nature from Adam by the way of natural generation. By that means alone is the nature of our first parents, as defiled, communicated unto us; for by this means do we become to appertain unto the stock as it was degenerate and corrupt. Wherefore that part of our nature wherein and whereby this great work was to be wrought, must, as unto its essence and substance, be derived from our first parents,—yet so as never to have been in Adam as a common representative, nor be derived from him by natural generation.

The bringing forth of our nature in such an instance—wherein it should relate no less really and truly unto the first Adam than we do ourselves, whereby there is the strictest alliance of nature between him so partaker of it and us, yet so as not in the least to participate of the guilt of the first sin, nor of the defilement of our nature thereby—must be an effect of infinite wisdom beyond the conceptions of any created understanding. And this, as we know, was done in the person

of Christ; for his human nature was never in Adam as his representative, nor was he comprised in the covenant wherein he stood. For he derived it *legally* only from and after the first promise, when Adam ceased to be a common person. Nor did it proceed from him by *natural* generation—the only means of the derivation of its depravation and pollution; for it was a "holy thing," created in the womb of the Virgin by the power of the Most High. "O the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

It was necessary, therefore, on all these considerations—it was so unto the glory of the holy properties of the divine nature, and the reparation of the honour of his holiness and righteousness—that he by whom the work of our recovery was to be wrought should be a man, partaker of the *nature that sinned*, yet *free from all sin*, and all the consequents of it. And this did divine wisdom contrive and accomplish in the human nature of Jesus Christ.

But yet, in the second place, on all the considerations before mentioned, it is no less evident that this work could not be wrought or effected by him who was no more than a mere man, who had no nature but ours—who was a human person, and no more. There was no one act which he was to perform, in order unto our deliverance, but did require a divine power to render it efficacious. But herein lies that great mystery of godliness whereunto a continual opposition hath been made by the gates of hell; as we manifested in the entrance of this discourse. But whereas it belongs unto the foundation of our faith, we must inquire into it, and confirm the truth of it with such demonstrations as divine revelation doth accommodate us withal. And three things are to be spoken unto.

First, We are to give in rational evidences that the recovery of mankind was not to be effected by any one who was a mere man, and no more, though it were absolutely necessary that a man he should be; he must be God also. *Secondly*, We must inquire into the suitableness or condecency unto divine wisdom in the redemption and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, who was God and man in one person; and thereon give a description of the person of Christ and its constitution, which suiteth all the ends of infinite wisdom in this glorious work. The first of these falls under sundry plain demonstrations.

1. That human nature might be restored, or any portion of mankind be eternally saved unto the glory of God, it was necessary, as we proved before, that *an obedience should be yielded unto God and his law*, which should give and bring more glory and honour unto his holiness than there was dishonour reflected on it by the disobedience of us all. Those who are otherwise minded care not what becomes of the glory of God, so that wicked, sinful man may be saved

one way or other. But these thoughts spring out of our apostasy, and belong not unto that estate wherein we loved God above all, and preferred his glory above all,—as it was with us at the first, in the original constitution of our nature. But such an obedience could never be yielded unto God by any mere creature whatever;—not by any one who was only a man, however dignified and exalted in state and condition above all others. For to suppose that God should be pleased and glorified with the obedience of any one man, more than he was displeased and dishonoured by the disobedience of Adam and all his posterity, is to fancy things that have no ground in reason or justice, or are any way suitable unto divine wisdom and holiness. He who undertaketh this work must have somewhat that is divine and infinite, to put an infinite value on his obedience—that is, he must be God.

2. The *obedience* of such a one, of a *mere man*, could have no influence at all on the recovery of mankind, nor the salvation of the church. For, whatever it were, it would be all due from him *for himself*, and so could only profit or benefit himself; for what is due from any on his own account, cannot redound or be reckoned unto the advantage of another. But there is no mere creature, nor can there be any such, but he is obliged for himself unto all the obedience unto God that he is capable of the performance of in this world; as we have before declared. Yea, universal obedience, in all possible instances, is so absolutely necessary unto him, as a creature made in dependence on God, and for the enjoyment of him, that the voluntary omission of it, in any one instance, would be a criminal disobedience, ruinous unto his own soul. Wherefore, no such obedience could be accepted as any kind of compensation for the disobedience of others, or in their stead. He, then, that performs this obedience must be one who was not originally obliged thereunto, on his own account, or for himself. And this must be a divine person, and none other; for every mere creature is so obliged. And there is nothing more fundamental in Gospel principles, than that the Lord Christ, in his divine person, was *above the law*, and for himself owed no obedience thereunto; but by his own condescension, as he was "made of a woman" for us, so he was "made under the law" for us. And therefore, those by whom the divine person of Christ is denied, do all of them contend that he yielded obedience unto God for himself, and not for us. But herein they bid defiance unto the principal effect of divine wisdom, wherein God will be eternally glorified.

3. The *people* to be freed, redeemed, and brought unto glory, were great and innumerable; "a great multitude, which no man can number," Rev. vii. 9. The *sins* which they were to be delivered, ransomed, and justified from—for which a propitiation was to be made—were next unto absolutely infinite. They wholly surpass the compre-

hension of any created understanding, or the compass of imagination. And *in every one* of them there was something reductively infinite, as committed against an infinite Majesty. The miseries which hereon all these persons were obnoxious unto were *infinite*, because eternal; or all that evil which our nature is capable to suffer was by them all eternally to be undergone.

By all these persons, in all these sins, there was an inroad made on the rule and government of God, an affront given unto his justice, in the violation of his law; nor can any of them be delivered from the consequents hereof in eternal misery, without a compensation and satisfaction made unto the justice of God. To assert the contrary, is to suppose, that upon the matter it is all one to him whether he be obeyed or disobeyed, whether he be honoured or dishonoured, in and by his creatures; and this is all one as to deny his very being, seeing it opposeth the glory of his essential properties. Now, to suppose that a mere man, by his temporary suffering of external pains, should make satisfaction unto the justice of God for all the sins of all these persons, so as it should be right and just with him not only to save and deliver them from all the evils they were liable unto, but also to bring them unto life and glory, is to constitute a mediation between God and man that should consist in appearance and ostentation, and not be an effect of divine wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, nor have its foundation in the nature and equity of things themselves. For the things supposed will not be reduced unto any rules of justice or proportion, that one of them should be conceived in any sense to answer unto the other; that is, there is nothing which answers any rule, notions, or conceptions of justice—nothing that might be exemplary unto men in the punishment of crimes—that the sins of an infinite number of men, deserving every one of them eternal death, should be expiated by the temporary sufferings of one mere man, so as to demonstrate the righteousness of God in the punishment of sin. But God doth not do these things for show or appearance, but according unto the real exigence of the holy properties of his nature. And on that supposition, there must be a *proportion* between the things themselves—namely, the sufferings of *one* and the deliverance of *all*.

Nor could the faith of man ever find a stable foundation to fix upon on the supposition before mentioned. No faith is able to conflict with this objection, that the sufferings of one mere man should be accepted with God as a just compensation for the sins of the whole church. Men who, in things of this nature, satisfy themselves with notions and fancies, may digest such suppositions; but those who make use of faith for their own delivery from under a conviction of sin, the nature and demerit of it, with a sense of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law against it, can find no relief in such notions

or apprehensions. But it became the wisdom of God, in the dispensation of himself herein unto the church, so to order things as that faith might have an immovable rock to build upon. This alone it hath in the person of Christ, God and man, his obedience and sufferings. Wherefore, those by whom the divine nature of the Lord Christ is denied, do all of them absolutely deny also that he made any satisfaction unto divine justice for sin. They will rather swallow all the absurdities which the absolute dismission of sin without satisfaction or punishment doth bring along with it, than grant that a mere man could make any such satisfaction by his temporary sufferings for the sins of the world. And, on the other hand, whoever doth truly and sincerely believe the divine person of Christ—namely, that he was God and man in one person, and as such a person acted in the whole work of mediation—he cannot shut his eyes against the glorious light of this truth, that what he did and suffered in that work must have an intrinsic worth and excellency in it, out-balancing all the evil in the sins of mankind—that more honour and glory accrued unto the holiness and law of God by his obedience than dishonour was cast on them by the disobedience of Adam and all his posterity.

4. The way whereby the church was to be recovered and saved, was by such works and actings as one should take on himself to perform in the way *of an office* committed unto him for that end. For whereas man could not recover, ransom, nor save himself, as we have proved, the whole must be wrought for him by another. The undertaking hereof by another must depend on the infinite wisdom, counsel, and pleasure of God, with the will and consent of him who was to undertake it. So also did the constitution of the way and means in particular whereby this deliverance was to be wrought. Hereon it became his office to do the things which were required unto that end. But we have before proved, apart by itself, that no office unto this purpose could be discharged towards God, or the whole church, by any one who was a man only. I shall not, therefore, here farther insist upon it, although there be good argument in it unto our present purpose.

5. If man be recovered, he must be restored into the *same state*, condition, and dignity, wherein he was placed before the fall. To restore him with any diminution of honour and blessedness was not suited unto divine wisdom and bounty; yea, seeing it was the infinite grace, goodness, and mercy of God to restore him, it seems agreeable unto the glory of divine excellencies in their operations, that he should be brought into a better and more honourable condition than that which he had lost. But before the fall, man was not subject nor obedient unto any but unto God alone. Somewhat less he was in dignity than the angels; howbeit he owed them no obedience—they were his fellow-servants. And as for all other things here be-

low, they were made "subject unto him, and put under his feet," he himself being in subjection unto God alone. But if he were redeemed and restored by one who was a mere creature, he could not be restored unto this state and dignity; for, on all grounds of right and equity, he must owe all service and obedience unto him by whom he was redeemed, restored, and recovered, as the author of the state wherein he is. For when we are "bought with a price," we are not our own, as the apostle affirms, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. We are therefore his who hath bought us; and him are we bound to serve in our souls and bodies, which are his. Accordingly, in the purchase of us, the Lord Christ became our absolute Lord, unto whom we owe all religious subjection of soul and conscience, Rom. xiv. 7–9. It would follow, therefore, that if we were redeemed and recovered by the interposition of a mere creature—if such a one were our Redeemer, Saviour, and Deliverer—into the service of a mere creature (that is, religious service and obedience) we should be recovered. And so they believe who affirm the Lord Christ to be a man, and no more. But, on this supposition, we are so far from an advancement in state and dignity by our restoration, that we do not recover what we were first instated in. For it belonged thereunto that we should owe religious service and obedience unto him alone who was God by nature over all, blessed for ever. And they bring all confusion into Christian religion, who make a mere creature the object of our faith, love, adoration, invocation, and all sacred worship. But in our present restoration we are made subject anew, as unto religious service, only unto God alone. Therefore the holy angels, the head of the creation, do openly disclaim any such service and veneration from us, because they are only the fellow-servants of them that have the testimony of Jesus, Rev. xix. 10. Nor hath God put the "world to come," the gospel state of the church, into subjection unto angels, or any other creature, but only unto the Son, who is Lord over his own house, even he that made all things, who is God, Heb. iii. 4–6. Wherefore, we are restored into our primitive condition, to be in spiritual subjection unto God alone. He, therefore, by whom we are restored, unto whom we owe all obedience and religious service, is, and ought to be, God also. And as they utterly overthrow the Gospel who affirm that all the obedience of it is due unto him who is a man, and no more—as do all by whom the divine nature of Christ is denied; so they debase themselves beneath the dignity of the state of redemption, and cast dishonour on the mediation of Christ, who subject themselves in any religious service to saints or angels, or any other creatures whatever.

On these suppositions, which are full of light and evidence, *infinite Wisdom* did interpose itself, to glorify all the other concerned excel-

lencies of the glory of God, in such a way as might solve all difficulties, and satisfy all the ends of God's glory, in the recovery and redemption of mankind. The case before it was as followeth :—

Man, by sin, had cast the most inconceivable dishonour on the righteousness, holiness, goodness, and rule of God ; and himself into the guilt of eternal ruin. In this state it became the wisdom and goodness of God, neither to suffer the whole race of mankind to come short eternally of that enjoyment of himself for which it was created, nor yet to deliver any one of them without a retrieval of the eternal honour of his righteousness, holiness, and rule, from the diminution and waste that was made of it by sin. As this could no way be done but by a full satisfaction unto justice and an obedience unto the law, bringing and yielding more honour unto the holiness and righteousness of God than they could any way lose by the sin and disobedience of man;—so this satisfaction must be made, and this obedience be yielded, in and by the same nature that sinned or disobeyed, whereby alone the residue of mankind may be interested in the benefits and effects of that obedience and satisfaction. Yet was it necessary hereunto, that the nature wherein all this was to be performed, though derived from the same common stock with that whereof in all our persons we are partakers, should be absolutely free from the contagion and guilt which, with it and by it, are communicated unto our persons from that common stock. Unless it were so, there could be no undertaking in it for others—it would not be able to answer for itself. But yet, on all these suppositions, no undertaking, no performance of duty, in human nature, could possibly yield that obedience unto God, or make that satisfaction for sin, whereon the deliverance of others might ensue, unto the glory of the holiness, righteousness, and rule of God.

In this state of things did *infinite Wisdom* interpose itself, in that glorious, ineffable contrivance of the person of Christ—or of the divine nature in the eternal Son of God and of ours in the same individual person. Otherwise this work could not be accomplished ;—at least all other ways are hidden from the eyes of all living, no created understanding being able to apprehend any other way whereby it might so have been, unto the eternal glory of God. This, therefore, is such an effect of divine wisdom as will be the object of holy adoration and admiration unto eternity;—as unto this life, how little a portion is it we know of its excellency !

CHAPTER XVII.

Other Evidences of Divine Wisdom in the Contrivance of the Work of Redemption in and by the Person of Christ, in Effects Evidencing a Condecency thereunto

That which remains of our present inquiry, is concerning those evidences of divine condecency, or suitableness unto infinite wisdom and goodness, which we may gather from the nature of this work, and its effects as expressed in divine revelation. Some few instances hereof I shall choose out from amongst many that might be insisted on.

1. *Man was made to serve God in all things.* In his person—in his soul and body—in all his faculties, powers, and senses—in all that was given unto him or intrusted with him—he was not his own, but every way a servant, in all that he was, in all that he had, in all that he did or was to do. This he was made for—this state and condition was necessary unto him as a creature. It could be no otherwise with any that was so; it was so with the angels, who were greater in dignity and power than man. The very name of *creature* includes the condition of universal subjection and service unto the Creator. This condition, in and by his sin, Adam designed to desert and to free himself from. He would exalt himself out of the state of *service* and *obedience* absolute and universal, into a condition of *self-sufficiency*—of domination and rule. He would be as God, like unto God; that is, subject no more to him, be in no more dependence on him—but advance his own will above the will of God. And there is somewhat of this in every sin;—the sinner would advance his own will in opposition unto and above the will of God. But what was the event hereof? Man, by endeavouring to free himself from absolute subjection and universal service, to invade absolute dominion, fell into absolute and eternal ruin.

For our recovery out of this state and condition, considering how we cast ourselves into it, the way insisted on was found out by divine wisdom—namely, the incarnation of the Son of God; for he was Lord of all, had absolute dominion over all, owed no service, no obedience for himself—being in the form of God, and equal unto him. From this state of absolute dominion he descended into a condition of absolute service. As Adam sinned and fell by leaving that state of absolute service which was due unto him, proper unto his nature, inseparable from it,—to attempt a state of absolute dominion which was not his own, not due unto him, not consistent with his nature; so the Son of God, being made the second Adam, relieved us by descending from a state of absolute dominion, which was his own—due to his nature—to take on him a state of absolute service, which

was not his own, nor due unto him. And this being inconsistent with his own divine nature, he performed it by taking our nature on him—making it his own. He descended as much beneath himself in his self-humiliation, as Adam designed to ascend above himself in his pride and self-exaltation.

The consideration of the divine grace and wisdom herein the apostle proposeth unto us, Phil. ii. 6–8, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Adam being in the form—that is, the state and condition—of a servant, did by robbery attempt to take upon him the "form of God," or to make himself equal unto him. The Lord Christ being in the "form of God"—that is, his essential form, of the same nature with him—accounted it no robbery to be in the state and condition of God, to be "equal to him;" but being made in the "fashion of a man," taking on him our nature, he also submitted unto the form or the state and condition of a servant therein. He had dominion over all, owed service and obedience unto none, being in the "form of God," and equal unto him—the condition which Adam aspired unto; but he condescended unto a state of absolute subjection and service for our recovery. This did no more belong unto him on his own account, than it belonged unto Adam to be like unto God, or equal to him. Wherefore it is said that he humbled himself unto it, as Adam would have exalted himself unto a state of dignity which was not his due.

This submission of the Son of God unto an estate of absolute and universal service is declared by the apostle, Heb. x. 5. For those words of the Psalmist, "Mine ears hast thou digged," or bored, Ps. xl. 6, he renders, "A body hast thou prepared me." There is an allusion in the words of the prophecy unto him under the law who gave up himself in absolute and perpetual service; in sign whereof his ears were bored with an awl. So the body of Christ was prepared for him, that therein he might be in a state of absolute service unto God. So he became to have *nothing of his own*—the original state that Adam would have forsaken; no, not [even] his life—he was obedient unto the death.

This way did divine wisdom find out and contrive, whereby more glory did arise unto the holiness and righteousness of God from his condescension unto universal service and obedience who was over all, God blessed for ever, than dishonour was cast upon them by the self-exaltation of him who, being in all things a servant, designed to be like unto God.

2. *Adam was poor in himself,* as a creature must be. What riches he had in his hand or power, they were none of his own, they were only trusted with him for especial service. In this state of poverty he commits the robbery of attempting to be like unto God. Being poor, he would make himself rich by the rapine of an equality with God. This brought on him and us all, as it was meet it should, the loss of all that we were intrusted with. Hereby we lost the image of God—lost our right unto the creatures here below—lost ourselves and our souls. This was the issue of his attempt to be rich when he was poor.

In this state infinite wisdom hath provided for our relief, unto the glory of God. For the Lord Jesus Christ being rich in himself, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9. He was rich in that riches which Adam designed by robbery; for "he was in the form of God, and accounted it no robbery to be equal with God." But he made himself poor for our sakes, with poverty which Adam would have relinquished; yea, to that degree that "he had not where to lay his head"—he had nothing. Hereby he made a compensation for what he never made spoil of, or paid what he never took. In this condescension of his, out of grace and love to mankind, was God more glorified than he was dishonoured in the sinful exaltation of Adam out of pride and self-love.

3. The sin of man consisted formally in *disobedience;* and it was the disobedience of him who was every way and in all things obliged unto obedience. For man—by all that he was, by all that he had received, by all that he expected or was farther capable of, by the constitution of his own nature, by the nature and authority of God, with his relation thereunto—was indispensably obliged unto universal obedience. His sin, therefore, was the disobedience of him who was absolutely obliged unto obedience by the very constitution of his being and necessary relation unto God. This was that which rendered it so exceeding sinful, and the consequents of it eternally miserable; and from this obligation his sin, in any one instance, was a total renunciation of all obedience unto God.

The recompense, with respect unto the glory of God, for *disobedience* must be by *obedience,* as hath been before declared. And if there be not a full obedience yielded unto the law of God in that nature that sinned, man cannot be saved without an eternal violation of the glory of God therein. But the disobedience of him who was every way obliged unto obedience could not be compensated but by his obedience who was no way obliged thereunto; and this could be only the obedience of him that is God, (for all creatures are obliged to obedience for themselves,) and it could be performed only by him who was man. Wherefore, for the accomplishment of this obedience, he who, in his own person as God, was above the law, was in his

human nature, in his own person as man, made under the law. Had he not been made under the law, what he did could not have been obedience; and had he not been in himself above the law, his obedience could not have been beneficial unto us. The sin of Adam (and the same is in the nature of every sin) consisted in this—that he who was naturally every way under the law, and subject unto it, would be every way above the law, and no way obliged by it. Wherefore it was taken away, unto the glory of God, by his obedience, who being in himself above the law, no way subject unto it, yet submitted, humbled himself, to be "made under the law," to be every way obliged by it. See Gal. iii. 13, iv. 4. This is the subject of the discourse of the apostle, Rom. v., from verse 12 to the end of the chapter.

Unto the glory of God in all these ends, the person of Christ, as an effect of infinite wisdom, was meet and able to be a mediator and undertaker between God and man. In the union of both our natures in the same person, he was so meet by his relation unto both;—unto God by *filiation*, or sonship; unto us by *brotherhood*, or nearness of kindred, Heb. ii. 14. And he was able from the dignity of his person; for the temporary sufferings of him who was eternal were a full compensation for the eternal sufferings of them who were temporary.

4. *God made man the lord of all things here below.* He was, as it were, *the heir of God*, as unto the inheritance of this world in present, and as unto a blessed state in eternal glory. But he lost all right and title hereunto by sin. He made forfeiture of the whole by the law of tenure whereby he held it, and God took the forfeiture. Wherefore he designs a new heir of all, and vests the whole inheritance of heaven and earth in him, even in his Son. He appointed him "the heir of all things," Heb. i. 2. This translation of God's inheritance the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 6–9; for the words which he cites from Ps. viii. 4–6,—"What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet,"—do declare the original condition of mankind in general. But man forfeited the dominion and inheritance that he was intrusted withal; and God settleth it anew, solely in the man Christ Jesus. So the apostle adds, "We see not yet all things put under him;" but we see it all accomplished in Jesus, verse 8. But as all other inheritances do descend with theirs, so did this unto him with its burden. There was a great debt upon it—the debt of sin. This he was to undergo, to make payment of, or satisfaction for, or he could not rightly enter upon the inheritance. This could no otherwise be done but by his suffering in our nature, as hath been declared. He who was the heir of all, was

in himself to purge our sins. Herein did the infinite wisdom of God manifest itself, in that he conveyed the inheritance of all things unto him who was meet and able so to enter upon it, so to enjoy and possess it, as that no detriment or damage might arise unto the riches, the revenue, the glory of God, from the waste made by the former possessor.

5. *Mankind was to be recovered unto faith and trust in God, as also unto the love of him above all.* All these things had utterly forsaken our nature; and the reduction of them into it is a work of the greatest difficulty. We had so provoked God, he had given such evidences of his wrath and displeasure against us, and our minds thereon were so alienated from him, as we stood in need of the strongest motives and highest encouragements once to attempt to return unto him, so as to place all our faith and trust in him, and all our love upon him.

Sinners generally live in a neglect and contempt of God, in an enmity against him; but whenever they are convinced of a necessity to endeavour a return unto him, the first thing they have to conflict withal is *fear*. Beginning to understand who and what he is, as also how things stand between him and them, they are afraid to have anything to do with him, and judge it impossible that they should find acceptance with him. This was the sense that Adam himself had upon his sin, when he was afraid, and hid himself. And the sense of other sinners is frequently expressed unto the same purpose in Scripture. See Isa. xxxiii. 14; Micah vi. 6, 7.

All these discouragements are absolutely provided against in that way of our recovery which infinite wisdom hath found out. It were a thing delightful to dwell on the securities given us therein, as unto our acceptance, in all those principles, acts, and duties wherein the renovation of the image of God doth consist. I must contract my meditations, and shall therefore instance in some few things only unto that purpose.

(1.) Faith is not capable of greater encouragement or confirmation than lieth in this one consideration—that what we are to believe unto this end is *delivered unto us by God himself in our nature.* What could confirm our faith and hope in God, what could encourage us to expect acceptance with God, like this ineffable testimony of his good-will unto us? The nature of things is not capable of greater assurance, seeing the divine nature is capable of no greater condescension.

This the Scripture proposeth as that which gives a just expectation that, against all fears and oppositions, we should close with divine calls and invitations to return unto God: "Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son," Matt. xxi. 37,—they will believe the message which I send by him. He hath "spoken unto us by his Son"—"the brightness of his glory, and the

express image of his person," Heb. i. 1–3. The consideration hereof is sufficient to dispel all that darkness and confusion which fear, dread, and guilt do bring on the minds of men, when they are invited to return unto God. That that God against whom we have sinned should speak unto us, and treat with us, in our own nature, about a return unto himself, is the utmost that divine excellencies could condescend unto. And as this was needful for us, (though proud men and senseless of sin understand it not,) so, if it be refused, it will be attended with the sorest destruction, Heb. xii. 25.

(2.) This *treaty* principally consists in a *divine declaration*, that all the causes of *fear* and dread upon the account of sin are removed and taken away. This is the substance of the Gospel, as it is declared by the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 18–21. Wherefore, if hereon we refuse to return unto God—to make him the object of our faith, trust, love, and delight—it is not by reason of any old or former sin, not of that of our original apostasy from God, nor of the effects of it against the law, [but] by the means of a new sin, outdoing them all in guilt and contempt of God. Such is final unbelief against the proposal of the Gospel. It hath more malignity in it than all other sins whatever. But by this way of our recovery, all cause of fear and dread is taken away—all pretences of a distrust of the love and good-will of God are defeated; so that if men will not hereon be recovered unto him, it is from their hatred of him and enmity unto him—the fruits whereof they must feed on to eternity.

(3.) Whereas, if we will return unto God by *faith*, we are also to return unto him in *love*, what greater motive can there be unto it than that *infinite love* of the Father and the Son unto us, which is gloriously displayed in this way of our recovery? See 1 John iv. 9, 10. "Si amare pigebat, saltem redamare ne pigeat."

(4.) The whole race of mankind falling into sin against God, and apostasy from him, there was no *example* left unto them to manifest how excellent, how glorious and comely a thing it is, to live unto God, —to believe and trust in him—to cleave unto him unchangeably by love; for they were utter strangers unto what is done by angels above, nor could be affected with their example. But without a pattern of these things, manifesting their excellency and reward, they could not earnestly endeavour to attain unto them. This is given us most conspicuously in the *human nature of Christ.* See Heb. xii. 2, 3. Hereby, therefore, everything needful for our encouragement to return unto God is, in infinite wisdom, provided for and proposed unto us.

6. Divine Wisdom, in the way of our recovery by Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, designed to *glorify a state of obedience unto God*, and to cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on the relinquishment of that state by sin. For, as God would recover and

restore us; so he would do it in a way of obedience on our part—of that obedience which we had forsaken. The design of man, which was imposed on him by the craft of Satan, was to become wise like unto God, knowing good and evil. The folly of this endeavour was quickly discovered in its effects. Sense of nakedness, with shame, misery, and death, immediately ensued thereon.

But divine Wisdom thought meet to aggravate the reproach of this folly. He would let us see wherein the true knowledge of good and evil did consist, and how foolishly we had aspired unto it by a relinquishment of that state of obedience wherein we were created.

Job xxviii. from verse 12 unto the end of the chapter, there is an inquiry after wisdom, and the place of its habitation. All creatures give an account that it is not in them, that it is hid from them—only they have heard the fame thereof. All the context is to evince that it is *essentially* and *originally* only in God himself. But if we cannot comprehend it in itself, yet may we not know what is wisdom unto us, and what is required thereunto? Yes, saith he; for "unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding," verse 28. Man, on the other hand, by the suggestion of Satan, thought, and now of himself continues to think, otherwise; namely, that the way to be wise is to relinquish these things. The world will not be persuaded that "the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" yea, there is nothing that the most of men do more despise and scorn, than thoughts that true wisdom doth consist in faith, love, fear, and obedience unto God. See Ps. xiv. 6. Whatever else may be pleaded to be in it, yet sure enough they are that those who count it wisdom are but fools.

To cast an everlasting reproach of folly on this contrivance of the devil and man, and uncontrollably to evince wherein alone true wisdom doth consist, God would glorify a state of obedience. He would render it incomparably more amiable, desirable, and excellent, than ever it could have appeared to have been in the obedience of all the angels in heaven and men on earth, had they continued therein. This he did in this way of our recovery,—in that his own eternal Son entered into a state of obedience, and took upon him the "form" or condition "of a servant" unto God.

What more evident conviction could there be of the folly of mankind in hearkening unto the suggestion of Satan to seek after wisdom in another condition? How could that great maxim, which is laid down in opposition unto all vain thoughts of man, be more eminently exemplified—that "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding?" What greater evidence could be given, that the nature of man is not capable of a better condition

than that of service and universal obedience unto God? How could any state be represented more amiable, desirable, and blessed? In the obedience of Christ, of the Son of God in our nature, apostate sinners are upbraided with their folly in relinquishing that state which, by his susception of it, is rendered so glorious. What have we attained by leaving that condition which the eternal Son of God delighted in? "I delight," saith he, "to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels," Ps. xl. 8—margin. It is the highest demonstration that our nature is not capable of more order, more beauty, more glory, than consists in obedience unto God. And that state which we fell into upon our forsaking of it, we now know to be all darkness, confusion, and misery.

Wherefore, seeing God, in infinite grace and mercy, would recover us unto himself; and, in his righteousness and holiness, would do this in a way of obedience,—of that obedience which we had forsaken; it hath an eminent impression of divine wisdom upon it, that in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, the only means of our recovery, he would cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on our apostasy from a state of it, and render it amiable and desirable unto all who are to return unto him.

To bear the shame of this folly, to be deeply sensible of it, and to live in a constant prospect and view of the glory of obedience in the person of Christ, with a sedulous endeavour for conformity thereunto, is the highest attainment of our wisdom in this world;—and whosoever is otherwise minded, is so at his own utmost peril.

7. God, in infinite wisdom, hath by this means *secured the whole inheritance of this life and that which is to come from a second forfeiture.* Whatever God will bestow on the children of men, he grants it unto them in the way of an inheritance. So the land of Canaan, chosen out for a representative of spiritual and eternal things, was granted unto Abraham and his seed for an inheritance. And his interest in the promise is expressed by being "heir of the world." All the things of this life, that are really good and useful unto us, do belong unto this inheritance. So they did when it was vested in Adam. All things of grace and glory do so also. And the whole of the privilege of believers is, that they are heirs of salvation. Hence godliness hath the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. And the promise is only of the inheritance. This inheritance, as was before intimated, was lost in Adam, and forfeited into the hand of the great Lord, the great possessor of heaven and earth. In his sovereign grace and goodness he was pleased again to restore it—as unto all the benefits of it—unto the former tenants; and that with an addition of grace, and a more exceeding weight of glory. But withal, infinite wisdom pro-

vides that a second forfeiture shall not be made of it. Wherefore the grant of it is not made immediately unto any of those for whose use and benefit it is prepared and granted. They had been once tried, and failed in their trust, unto their own eternal beggary and ruin, had not infinite grace interposed for their relief. And it did not become the wisdom and glory of God to make a second grant of it, which might be frustrate in like manner. Wherefore he would not commit it again unto any mere creature whatever; nor could it safely have been so done with security unto his glory. For—

(1.) It was *too great a trust*—even the whole inheritance of heaven and earth, all the riches of grace and glory—to be committed unto any one of them. God would not give this glory unto any one creature. If it be said it was first committed unto Adam, and therefore to have it again is not an honour above the capacity of a creature; I say that the nature of the inheritance is greatly changed. The whole of what was intrusted with Adam comes exceedingly short of what God hath now prepared as the inheritance of the church. There is grace in it, and glory added unto it, which Adam neither had nor could have right unto. It is now of that nature, as could neither be intrusted with, nor communicated by, any mere creature. Besides, he that hath it is the object of the faith and trust of the church; nor can any be interested in any part of this inheritance without the exercise of those and all other graces on him whose the inheritance is. And so to be the object of our faith, is the prerogative of the divine nature alone.

(2.) No *mere creature* could secure this inheritance that it should be lost no more; and yet if it were so, it would be highly derogatory unto the glory of God. For two things were required hereunto;—*First*, That he in whom this trust is vested should be in himself incapable of any such failure, as through which, by the immutable, eternal law of obedience unto God, a forfeiture of it should be made; —*Secondly*, That he undertake for them all who shall be heirs of salvation, who shall enjoy this inheritance, that none of them should lose or forfeit their own personal interest in it, or the terms whereon it is conveyed and communicated unto them. But no mere creature was sufficient unto these ends; for no one of them, in and by himself, in the constitution of his nature, is absolutely free from falling from God, himself. They may receive—the angels in heaven and the glorified saints have received—such a confirmation, in and by grace, as that they shall never actually apostatize or fall from God; but this they have not from themselves, nor the principles of their own nature,—which is necessary unto him that shall receive this trust. For so when it was first vested in Adam, he was left to preserve it by the innate concreated abilities of his own nature. And as unto

the latter, all the angels in heaven cannot undertake to secure the obedience of any one man, so as that the conveyance of the inheritance may be sure unto him. Wherefore, with respect hereunto, those angels themselves, though the most holy and glorious of all the creatures of God, have no greater trust or interest than to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14. So unmeet are they to have the whole inheritance vested in any of them.

But all this infinite wisdom hath provided for in the great "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." God herein makes his only Son the *heir of all things*, and vests the whole inheritance absolutely in him. For the *promise*, which is the court-roll of heaven—the only external mean and record of its conveyance—was originally made unto Christ only. God said not, "And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Gal. iii. 16. And we become again heirs of God only as we are joint heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17; that is, by being taken into a participation of that inheritance which is vested in him alone. For many may be partakers of the *benefit* of that whose *right* and *title* is in one alone, when it is conveyed unto him for their use. And hereby the ends before mentioned are fully provided for. For—

[1.] He who is thus made the "heir of all" is meet to be intrusted with the glory of it. For where this grant is solemnly expressed, it is declared that he is the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 2, 3; and that by him the worlds were made. He alone was meet to be this heir who is partaker of the divine nature, and by whom all things were created; for such things belong unto it as cannot appertain unto any other. The reader may consult, if he please, our exposition of that place of the apostle.

[2.] Any failure in his own person was absolutely impossible. The subsistence of the human nature in the person of the Son of God, rendered the least sin utterly impossible unto him; for all the moral operations of that nature are the acts of the person of the Son of God. And hereby not only is the inheritance secured, but also an assurance that it is so is given unto all them that do believe. This is the life and soul of all Gospel comforts, that the whole inheritance of grace and glory is vested in Christ, where it can never suffer loss or damage. When we are sensible of the want of grace, should we go unto God, and say, "Father, give us the portion of goods that falls unto us," as the prodigal did, we should quickly consume it, and bring ourselves unto the utmost misery, as he did also. But in Christ the whole inheritance is secured for evermore.

[3.] He is able to preserve all those who shall be heirs of this inheritance, that they forfeit not their own personal interest therein,

according unto the terms of the covenant whereby it is made over to them. He can and will, by the power of his grace, preserve them all unto the full enjoyment of the purchased inheritance. We hold our title by the rod—at the will of the Lord; and many failures we are liable unto, whereon we are "in misericordia Domini," and are subject unto amercements. But yet the whole inheritance being granted unto Christ is eternally secured for us, and we are by his grace preserved from such offences against the supreme Lord, or committing any such wastes, as should cast us out of our possession. See Ps. lxxxix. 27–32. Thus in all things infinite wisdom hath provided that no second forfeiture should be made of the inheritance of grace and glory, which as it would have been eternally ruinous unto mankind, so it was inconsistent with the glory and honour of God.

8. *The wisdom of God was gloriously exalted in the righteous destruction of Satan and his interest*, by the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God. He had prevailed against the first way of the manifestation of divine glory; and therein both pleased and prided himself. Nothing could ever give such satisfaction unto the malicious murderer, as the breach he had occasioned between God and man, with his hopes and apprehensions that it would be eternal. He had no other thoughts but that the whole race of mankind, which God had designed unto the enjoyment of himself, should be everlastingly ruined. So he had satisfied his envy against man in his eternal destruction with himself, and his malice against God in depriving him of his glory. Hereon, upon the distance that he had made between God and man, he interposed himself, and boasted himself for a long season as "The god of this world," who had all power over it and in it. It belonged unto the honour of the wisdom of God that he should be defeated in this triumph. Neither was it meet that this should be done by a mere act of sovereign omnipotent power; for he would yet glory in his craft and the success of it,—that there was no way to disappoint him, but by crushing him with power, without respect unto righteousness or demonstration of wisdom. Wherefore, it must be done in such a way as wherein he might see, unto his eternal shame and confusion, all his arts and subtleties defeated by infinite wisdom, and his enterprise overthrown in a way of right and equity. The remark that the Holy Ghost puts on the serpent, which was his instrument in drawing man unto apostasy from God—namely, that he was "more subtle than any beast of the field"—is only to intimate wherein Satan designed his attempt, and from whence he hoped for his success. It was not an act of *power* or rage; but of *craft*, counsel, subtlety, and deceit. Herein he gloried and prided himself; wherefore the way to disappoint him with shame, must be a contrivance of infinite wisdom, turning all his artifices into mere folly.

This work of God, with respect unto him, is expressed in the Scripture two ways:—First, it is called the spoiling of him, as unto his power and the prey that he had taken. The "strong man armed" was to be bound, and his goods spoiled. The Lord Christ, by his death, "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." He "led captivity captive," spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross. So Abraham, when he smote the kings, not only delivered Lot, who was their captive, but also took all their spoils. Again, it is expressed by the destruction of his works: "For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." The spoils which he had in his own power were taken from him, and the works which he had erected in the minds of men were demolished. The web which he had woven to clothe himself withal, as the god of this world, was unravelled to the last thread. And although all this seems to represent a work of power, yet was it indeed an effect of wisdom and righteousness principally.

For the power which Satan had over mankind was in itself *unjust.* For, (1.) He obtained it by *fraud* and *deceit:* "The serpent beguiled" Eve. (2.) He possessed it with *injustice,* with respect unto God, being an invader of his right and possession. (3.) He used and exercised it with *malice,* tyranny, and rage;—so as that it was every way unjust, both in its foundation and execution. With respect hereunto he was justly destroyed by omnipotent power, which puts forth itself in his eternal punishment. But, on the other side, mankind did suffer justly under his power—being given up unto it in the righteous judgment of God. For one may *suffer justly* what another doth *unjustly inflict;* as when one causelessly strikes an innocent man, if he strikes him again, he who did the first injury suffereth justly, but the other doth unjustly in revenging himself. Wherefore, as man was given up unto him in a way of punishment, he was a lawful captive, and was not to be delivered but in a way of justice. And this was done in a way that Satan never thought of. For, by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God incarnate, there was full satisfaction made unto the justice of God for the sins of man, a reparation of his glory, and an exaltation of the honour of his holiness, with all the other properties of his nature, as also of his law, outbalancing all the diminution of it by the first apostasy of mankind; as hath been declared. Immediately hereon all the charms of Satan were dissolved, all his chains loosed, his darkness that he had brought on the creation dispelled, his whole plot and design defeated;—whereon he saw himself, and was exposed unto all the holy angels of heaven, in all the counsels, craft, and power he had boasted of, to be nothing but a congeries—a mass of darkness, malice, folly, impotency, and rage.

Hereon did Satan make an entrance into one of the principal parts

of his eternal torments, in that furious self-maceration which he is given up unto on the consideration of his defeat and disappointment. *Absolute power* he always feared, and what it would produce; for he *believes that, and trembles.* But against any other way he thought he had secured himself. It lieth plain to every understanding, what shame, confusion, and self-revenge, the proud apostate was cast into, upon his holy, righteous disappointment of his design; whereas he had always promised himself to carry his cause, or at least to put God to act in the destruction of his dominion, by mere omnipotent power, without regard unto any other properties of his nature. To find that which he contrived for the destruction of the glory of God—the disappointment of his ends in the creation of all things—and the eternal ruin of mankind, to issue in a more glorious exaltation of the holy properties of the divine nature, and an unspeakable augmentation of blessedness unto mankind itself, is the highest aggravation of his eternal torments. This was a work every way becoming the infinite wisdom of God.

9. Whereas there are three distinct persons in the holy Trinity, it became the wisdom of God that *the Son, the second person,* should undertake this work, and be incarnate. I shall but sparingly touch on this glorious mystery; for as unto the reason of it, it is absolutely resolved into the infinite wisdom and sovereign counsel of the divine will. And all such things are the objects of a holy admiration—not curiously to be inquired into. To intrude ourselves into the things which we have not seen—that is, which are not revealed—in those concernments of them which are not revealed, is not unto the advantage of faith in our edification. But as unto what is declared of them—either immediately and directly, or by their relation unto other known truths—we may meditate on them unto the improvement of faith and love towards God. And some things are thus evident unto us in this mystery.

(1.) We had by sin lost *the image of God,* and thereby all gracious acceptance with him,—all interest in his love and favour. In our recovery, as we have declared, this image is again to be restored unto us, or we are to be renewed into the likeness of God. And there was a condecency unto divine wisdom, that this work should, in a peculiar manner, be effected by him who is the essential image of God—that is, the Father. This, as we have formerly showed, was the person of the Son. Receiving his personal subsistence, and therewithal the divine nature, with all its essential properties, from the Father by eternal generation, he was thereon the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory. Whatever is in the person of the Father is in the person of the Son, and being all received from the Father, he is his essential image. And one end of his incarnation was, that he might be the representative image of God unto us. Whereas, therefore, in the work of our recovery, the image of God should be

restored in us, there was a condecency that it should be done by him who was the essential image of God; for it consists in the communication of the effects and likeness of the same image unto us which was essentially in himself.

(2.) We were by nature *the sons of God.* We stood in relation of sons unto him by virtue of our creation—the communication of his image and likeness—with the preparation of an inheritance for us. On the same accounts the angels are frequently called the sons of God. This title, this relation unto God, we utterly lost by sin, becoming aliens from him, and enemies unto him. Without a recovery into this estate we cannot be restored, nor brought unto the enjoyment of God. And this cannot be done but by adoption. Now, it seems convenient unto divine wisdom that he should recover our sonship by adoption, who was himself the essential and eternal Son of God.

(3.) The sum of what we can comprehend in this great mystery ariseth from the consideration of the *order* of the holy persons of the blessed Trinity in their operations; for their order herein doth follow that of their subsistence. Unto this great work there are peculiarly required, authority, love, and power—all directed by infinite wisdom. These originally reside in the person of the Father, and the acting of them in this matter is constantly ascribed unto him. He sent the Son, as he gives the Spirit, by an act of sovereign authority. And he sent the Son from his eternal love;—he loved the world, and sent his Son to die. This is constantly assigned to be the effect of the love and grace of the Father. And he wrought in Christ, and he works in us, with respect unto the end of this mystery, with the "exceeding greatness of his power," Eph. i. 19. The Son, who is the second person in the order of *subsistence*, in the order of *operation* puts the whole authority, love, and power of the Father in execution. This order of subsistence and operation thereon is expressly declared by the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 6, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The Father is the original fountain and spring, ἐξ οὗ, *from whom*—[from] whose original authority, love, goodness, and power—are all these things. That expression, "from him," peculiarly denotes the eternal original of all things. But how are this authority, goodness, love, and power in the Father, whence all these things spring and arise, made effectual—how are their effects wrought out and accomplished? "There is one Lord," even Jesus Christ, a distinct person from the Father, δι' οὗ, "by whom are all things." He works in the order of his subsistence, to execute, work, and accomplish all that originally proceedeth from the Father. By the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in order of subsistence, there is made a *perfecting application* of the whole unto all its proper ends.

Wherefore, this work of our redemption and recovery being the especial effect of the authority, love, and power of the Father—it was to be *executed* in and by the person of the Son; as the application of it unto us is made by the Holy Ghost. Hence it became not the person of the Father to assume our nature;—it belonged not thereunto in the order of subsistence and operation in the blessed Trinity. The authority, love, and power whence the whole work proceeded, were his in a peculiar manner. But the execution of what infinite wisdom designed in them and by them belonged unto another. Nor did this belong unto the person of the Holy Spirit, who, in order of divine operation following that of his subsistence, was to perfect the whole work, in making application of it unto the church when it was wrought. Wherefore it was every way suited unto divine wisdom—unto the order of the Holy Persons in their subsistence and operation—that this work should be undertaken and accomplished in the person of the Son. What is farther must be referred unto another world.

These are some few of those things wherein the infinite wisdom of God in this holy contrivance giveth forth some rays of itself into enlightened minds and truly humbled souls. But how little a portion of it is heard by us! How weak, how low are our conceptions about it! We cannot herein find out the Almighty unto perfection. No small part of the glory of heaven will consist in that comprehension which we shall have of the mystery of the wisdom, love, and grace of God herein.

Howbeit, we are with all diligence to inquire into it whilst we are here in the way. It is the very *centre* of all glorious evangelical truths. Not one of them can be understood, believed, or improved as they ought, without a due comprehension of their relation hereunto; as we have showed before.

This is that which the prophets of old inquired into and after with all diligence, even the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, with the glory that ensued thereon, 1 Pet. i. 11. Yet had they not that light to discern it by which we have. The "least in the kingdom of God," as to the knowledge of this mystery, may be above the greatest of them. And ought we not to fear lest our sloth under the beams of the sun should be condemned by their diligence in the twilight?

This the angels bow down to look into, although their concerns therein are not equal to ours. But angels are angels, and prophets were prophets; we are a generation of poor, sinful men, who are little concerned in the glory of God or our own duty.

Is it not much to be lamented that many Christians content themselves with a very superficiary knowledge of these things? How are the studies, the abilities, the time, and diligence of many excellent persons engaged in, and laid out about, the works of nature, and the

effects of divine wisdom and power in them, by whom any endeavour to inquire into this glorious mystery is neglected, if not despised! Alas! the light of divine wisdom in the greatest works of nature holds not the proportion of the meanest star unto the sun in its full strength, unto that glory of it which shines in this mystery of God manifest in the flesh, and the work accomplished thereby! A little time shall put an end unto the whole subject of their inquiries, with all the concernment of God and man in them for evermore. This alone is that which fills up eternity, and which, although it be now with some a nothing, yet will shortly be all.

Is it not much more to be lamented, that many who are called Christians do even despise these mysteries? Some oppose them directly with pernicious heresies about the person of Christ, denying his divine nature, or the personal union of his two natures, whereby the whole mystery of infinite wisdom is evacuated and rejected; and some there are who, though they do not deny the truth of this mystery, yet they both despise and reproach such as with any diligence endeavour to inquire into it. I shall add the words used on a like occasion, unto them who sincerely believe the mysteries of the Gospel: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And the due contemplation of this mystery will certainly be attended with many spiritual advantages.

[1.] It will bring in steadfastness in *believing*, as unto the especial concerns of our own souls; so as to give unto God the glory that is his due thereon. This is the work, these are the ends, of faith, Rom. v. 1–5. We see how many Christians who are sincere believers, yet fluctuate in their minds with great uncertainties as unto their own state and condition. The principal reason of it is, because they are "unskilful in the word of righteousness," and so are babes, in a weak condition, as the apostle speaks, Heb. v. 13. This is the way of spiritual peace. When the soul of a believer is able to take a view of the glory of the wisdom of God, exalting all the other holy properties of his nature, in this great mystery unto our salvation, it will obviate all fears, remove all objections, and be a means of bringing in assured peace into the mind; which without a due comprehension of it will never be attained.

[2.] The acting of faith hereon is that which is accompanied with its great power to *change and transform the soul* into the image and likeness of Christ. So is it expressed by the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"—we all *beholding*—κατοπτριζόμενοι, not taking a

transient glance of these things, but diligently inspecting them, as those do who, through a glass, design a steady view of things at a distance.[1] That which we are thus to behold by the continued actings of faith in holy contemplation, is the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," as it is expressed, chap. iv. 6; which is nothing but that mystery of godliness in whose explanation we have been engaged. And what is the effect of the steady contemplation of this mystery by faith? Μεταμορφούμεθα—"we are changed"—made quite other creatures than we were—cast into the form, figure, and image of Jesus Christ—the great design of all believers in this world. Would we, then, be like unto Christ? would we bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy? Is nothing so detestable unto us as the deformed image of the old man, in the lusts of the mind and of the flesh? Is nothing so amiable and desirable as the image of Christ, and the representation of God in him? This is the way, this is the means of attaining the end which we aim at.

[3.] Abounding in this duty is the most effectual means of freeing us, in particular, from the shame and bane of *profession* in *earthly-mindedness*. There is nothing so unbecoming a Christian as to have his mind always exercised about, always filled with thoughts of, earthly things. And according as men's thoughts are exercised about them, their affections are increased and inflamed towards them. These things mutually promote one another, and there is a kind of circulation in them. Multiplied thoughts inflame affections, and inflamed affections increase the number of thoughts concerning them. Nothing is more repugnant unto the whole life of faith, nothing more obstructive unto the exercise of all grace, than a prevalency of this frame of mind. And at this season, in an especial manner, it is visibly preying on the vitals of religion. To abound in the contemplation of this mystery, and in the exercise of faith about it, as it is diametrically opposed unto this frame, so it will gradually cast it out of the soul. And without this we shall labour in the fire for deliverance from this pernicious evil.

[4.] And hereby are we prepared for the *enjoyment of glory* above. No small part of that glory consists in the eternal contemplation and adoration of the wisdom, goodness, love, and power of God in this mystery, and the effects of it; as shall afterward be declared.

[1] Κατοπτρίζω does not admit of the signification here ascribed to it by Dr Owen. It denotes looking into a *mirror*, not through a *telescope:* "Beholding the glory of the Lord as reflected and radiant in the Gospel."—See Dr Robinson's Lexicon. Another view is taken of the passage, by which a tacit antithesis is instituted between κάτοπτρον and εἰκών: "Dominus nos κατοπτρίζει, *splendorem* faciei suae in corda nostra, *tanquam in specula immittens:* nos illum splendorem suscipimus et referimus. Elegans antitheton ad ἐντετυπωμένη, *insculpta*. Nam quae *insculpuntur* fiunt paullatim: quae *in speculo repræsentantur*, fiunt celerrime." Bengelii Gnomon in locum. Owen himself gives a correct explanation of the passage in his work on the Mortification of Sin, chap. xii.—Ed.

And how can we better or otherwise be prepared for it, but by the implanting a sense of it on our minds by sedulous contemplation whilst we are in this world? God will not take us into heaven, into the vision and possession of heavenly glory, with our heads and hearts reeking with the thoughts and affections of earthly things. He hath appointed means to make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," before he will bring us into the enjoyment of it. And this is the principal way whereby he doth it; for hereby it is that we are "changed" into the image of Christ, "from glory to glory," and make the nearest approaches unto the eternal fulness of it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Nature of the Person of Christ, and the Hypostatical Union of his Natures Declared.

The nature or constitution of the person of Christ hath been commonly spoken unto and treated of in the writings both of the ancient and modern divines. It is not my purpose, in this discourse, to handle anything that hath been so fully already declared by others. Howbeit, to speak something of it in this place is necessary unto the present work; and I shall do it in answer unto a double end or design:—

First, To help those that believe, *in the regulation of their thoughts* about this divine person, so far as the Scripture goeth before us. It is of great importance unto our souls that we have right conceptions concerning him; not only in general, and in opposition unto the pernicious heresies of them by whom his divine person or either of his natures is denied, but also in those especial instances wherein it is the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. For although the knowledge of him mentioned in the Gospel be not confined merely unto his person in the constitution thereof, but extends itself unto the whole work of his mediation, with the design of God's love and grace therein, with our own duty thereon; yet is this knowledge of his person the foundation of all the rest, wherein if we mistake or fail, our whole building in the other parts of the knowledge of him will fall unto the ground. And although the saving knowledge of him is not to be obtained without especial divine revelation, Matt. xvi. 17—or saving illumination, 1 John v. 20—nor can we know him perfectly until we come where he is to behold his glory, John xvii. 24; yet are instructions from the Scripture of use to lead us into those farther degrees of the knowledge of him which are attainable in this life.

Secondly, To manifest in particular how *ineffably distinct the re-*

lation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus is, from all that relation and union which may be between God and believers, or between God and any other creature. The want of a true understanding hereof is the fundamental error of many in our days. We shall manifest thereupon how "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," so that in all things "he might have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 18, 19. And I shall herein wholly avoid the curious inquiries, bold conjectures, and unwarrantable determinations of the schoolmen and some others. For many of them, designing to explicate this mystery, by exceeding the bounds of Scripture light and sacred sobriety, have obscured it. Endeavouring to render all things plain unto reason, they have expressed many things unsound as unto faith, and fallen into manifold contradictions among themselves. Hence Aquinas affirms, that three of the ways of declaring the *hypostatical union* which are proposed by the Master of the Sentences,[1] are so far from probable opinions, as that they are downright heresies. I shall therefore confine myself, in the explication of this mystery, unto the propositions of divine revelation, with the just and necessary expositions of them.

What the Scripture represents of the wisdom of God in this great work may be reduced unto these four heads:—I. The assumption of our nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God. II. The union of the two natures in that single person which is consequential thereon. III. The mutual communication of those distinct natures, the divine and human, by virtue of that union. IV. The enunciations or predications concerning the person of Christ, which follow on that union and communion.

I. The first thing in the divine constitution of the person of Christ as God and man, is *assumption*. That ineffable divine act I intend whereby the person of the Son of God assumed our nature, or took it into a personal subsistence with himself. This the Scripture expresseth sometimes *actively*, with respect unto the divine nature acting in the person of the Son, the nature assuming; sometimes *passively*, with respect unto the human nature, the nature assumed. The first it doth, Heb. ii. 14, 16, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham;" Phil. ii. 6, 7, "Being in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant;" and in sundry other places. The assumption, the taking of our human nature to be his

[1] Peter Lombard. Born near Novara in Lombardy—died in 1164, bishop of Paris—called "Magister Sententiarum," from one of his works, which is a compilation of sentences from the Fathers, arranged so as to form a system of Divinity, and held in high repute during mediæval times. It appeared in 1172.—Ed.

own, by an ineffable act of his power and grace, is clearly expressed. And to take it to be his own, his own nature, can be no otherwise but by giving it a subsistence in his own person; otherwise his own nature it is not, nor can be. Hence God is said to "purchase his church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. That relation and denomination of "his own," is from the single person of him whose it is. The latter is declared, John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh;" Rom. viii. 3, God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh;" Gal. iv. 4, "Made of a woman, made under the law;" Rom. i. 3, "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh." The eternal Word, the Son of God, was not made flesh, not made of a woman, nor of the seed of David, by the conversion of his substance or nature into flesh; which implies a contradiction,—and, besides, is absolutely destructive of the divine nature. He could no otherwise, therefore, be made flesh, or made of a woman, but in that our nature was made his, by his assuming of it to be his own. The same person —who before was not flesh, was not man—was made flesh as man, in that he took our human nature to be his own.

This ineffable act is the foundation of the divine relation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. We can only adore the mysterious nature of it,—"great is this mystery of godliness." Yet may we observe sundry things to direct us in that duty.

1. As unto *original efficiency*, it was the act of the divine nature, and so, consequently, of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*. For so are all outward acts of God—the divine nature being the immediate principle of all such operations. The wisdom, power, grace, and goodness exerted therein, are essential properties of the divine nature. Wherefore the acting of them originally belongs equally unto each person, equally participant of that nature. (1.) As unto *authoritative designation*, it was the act of the Father. Hence is he said to send "his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4. (2.) As unto the *formation of the human nature*, it was the peculiar act of the Spirit, Luke i. 35. (3.) As unto the *term of the assumption*, or the taking of our nature unto himself, it was the peculiar act of the person of the Son. Herein, as Damascen observes, the other persons had no concurrence, but only κατὰ βούλησιν καὶ ἐυδοκίαν—"by counsel and approbation."

2. This assumption was the only *immediate act* of the divine nature on the human in the person of the Son. All those that follow, in subsistence, sustentation, with all others that are communicative, do ensue thereon.

3. This *assumption* and the *hypostatical union* are distinct and different in the formal reason of them. (1.) *Assumption* is the *immediate act* of the divine nature in the person of the Son on the

human; *union* is *mediate*, by virtue of that assumption. (2.) *Assumption* is unto personality; it is that act whereby the Son of God and our nature became one person. *Union* is an act or relation of the natures subsisting in that one person. (3.) *Assumption* respects the *acting* of the divine and the *passion* of the human nature; the one *assumeth*, the other is *assumed*. *Union* respects the *mutual relation* of the natures unto each other. Hence the divine nature may be said to be united unto the human, as well as the human unto the divine; but the divine nature cannot be said to be assumed as the human is. Wherefore *assumption* denotes the acting of the one nature and the passion of the other; *union*, the mutual relation that is between them both.

These things may be safely affirmed, and ought to be firmly believed, as the sense of the Holy Ghost in those expressions: "He took on him the seed of Abraham"—"He took on him the form of a servant;" and the like. And who can conceive the condescension of divine goodness, or the actings of divine wisdom and power therein?

II. That which followeth hereon, is the *union* of the two natures in the same person, or the *hypostatical union*. This is included and asserted in a multitude of divine testimonies. Isa. vii. 14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," as Matt. i. 23. He who was conceived and born of the virgin was Immanuel, or God with us; that is, God manifest in the flesh, by the union of his two natures in the same person. Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." That the same person should be "the mighty God" and a "child born," is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can be true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in the same person. So he said of himself, "Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58. That he, the same person who then spake unto the Jews, and as a man was little more than thirty years of age, should also be before Abraham, undeniably confirms the union of another nature, in the same person with that wherein he spoke those words, and without which they could not be true. He had not only another nature which did exist before Abraham, but the same individual person who then spoke in the human nature did then exist. See to the same purpose, John i. 14; Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Col. ii. 9; 1 John iii. 16.

This union the ancient church affirmed to be made ἀτρέπτως, "without any change" in the person of the Son of God, which the divine nature is not subject unto;—ἀδιαιρέτως, with a distinction of natures, but "without any division" of them by separate subsistences;—ἀσυγχύτως, "without mixture" or confusion;—ἀχωρίστως, "without

separation" or distance; and οὐσιωδῶς, "substantially," because it was of two substances or essences in the same person, in opposition unto all *accidental* union, as the "fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily."[1]

These expressions were found out and used by the ancient church to prevent the fraud of those who corrupted the doctrine of the person of Christ, and (as all of that sort ever did, and yet continue so to do) obscured their pernicious sentiments under ambiguous expressions. And they also made use of sundry terms which they judged significant of this great mystery, or the incarnation of the Son of God. Such are ἐνσάρκωσις, "incarnation;" ἐνσωμάτωσις, "embodying;" ἐνανθρώπησις, "inhumanation;" ἡ δεσποτικὴ ἐπιδημία, καὶ παρουσία, ἡ οἰκονομία, to the same purpose; ἡ διὰ σαρκὸς ὁμιλία, "his conversation in or by the flesh;" ἡ διὰ ἀνθρωπότητος φανέρωσις, "his manifestation by humanity;" ἡ ἔλευσις, "the advent;" ἡ κένωσις, "the exinanition," or humiliation; ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιφάνεια, "the appearance" or manifestation "of Christ;" ἡ συγκατάβασις, "the condescension." Most of these expressions are taken from the Scripture, and are used therein with respect unto this mystery, or some concernments of it. Wherefore, as our faith is not confined unto any one of these words or terms, so as that we should be obliged to believe not only the things intended, but also the manner of its expression in them; so, in as far as they explain the thing intended according unto the mind of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, and obviate the senses of men of corrupt minds, they are to be embraced and defended as useful helps in teaching the truth.

That whereby it is most usually declared in the writings of the ancients, is χάρις ἑνώσεως, "gratia unionis," the "grace of union;"—which form of words some manifesting themselves strangers unto, do declare how little conversant they are in their writings. Now, it is not any habitual inherent grace residing subjectively in the person or human nature of Christ that is intended, but things of another nature.

1. The *cause of this union* is expressed in it. This is the free grace and favour of God towards the man Christ Jesus—predestinating, designing, and taking him into actual union with the person of the Son, without respect unto, or foresight of, any precedent dignity or merit in him, 1 Pet. i. 20.

Hence is that of Austin, "Eâ gratiâ fit ab initio fidei suæ homo quicunque Christianus, quâ gratiâ homo ille ab initio factus est Christus," De Prædest. Sanct., cap. xv. For whereas all the inherent grace of the human nature of Christ, and all the holy obedience which proceeded from it, was consequent in order of nature unto this union, and an effect of it, they could in no sense be the meritorious or procuring causes of it;—it was of grace.

[1] The first four of these terms were adopted by the Fourth Œcumenical Council, held at Chalcedon, A.D. 451.—Ed.

2. It is used also by many and designed to express the peculiar dignity of the human nature of Christ. This is that wherein no creature is participant, nor ever shall be unto eternity. This is the fundamental privilege of the human nature of Christ, which all others, even unto his eternal glory, proceed from, and are resolved into.

3. The *glorious meetness* and ability of the person of Christ, for and unto all the acts and duties of his mediatory office. For they are all resolved into the union of his natures in the same person, without which not one of them could be performed unto the benefit of the church. And this is that "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," which renders him so glorious and amiable unto believers. Unto them "that believe he is precious."

The common prevalent expression of it at present in the church is the *hypostatical union;* that is, the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Son of God, the human nature having no personality nor subsistence of its own.

With respect unto this union the name of Christ is called "Wonderful," as that which hath the pre-eminence in all the effects of divine wisdom. And it is a singular effect thereof. There is no other union in things divine or human, in things spiritual or natural, whether substantial or accidental, that is of the same kind with it;—it differs specifically from them all.

(1.) The most glorious union is that of the *Divine Persons* in the same being or nature; the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, the Holy Spirit in them both, and both in him. But this is a union of distinct persons in the unity of the same single nature. And this, I confess, is more glorious than that whereof we treat; for it is in God absolutely, it is eternal, of his nature and being. But this union we speak of is not God;—it is a creature,—an effect of divine wisdom and power. And it is different from it herein, inasmuch as that is of *many distinct persons* in the same nature;—this is of *distinct natures* in the same person. That union is *natural,* substantial, essential, in the same nature;—this, as it is not accidental, as we shall show, so it is not properly substantial, because it is not of the same nature, but of diverse in the same person, remaining distinct in their essence and substance, and is therefore peculiarly hypostatical or personal. Hence Austin feared not to say, that "Homo potius est in filio Dei, quam filius in Patre;" De Trin., lib. i. cap. 10. But that is true only in this one respect, that the Son is not so in the Father as to become one person with him. In all other respects it must be granted that the in-being of the Son in the Father—the union between them, which is natural, essential, and eternal—doth exceed this in glory, which was a temporary, external act of divine wisdom and grace.

(2.) The most eminent *substantial* union in things natural, is that

of the *soul and body* constituting an individual person. There is, I confess, some kind of similitude between this union and that of the different natures in the person of Christ; but it is not of the same kind or nature. And the dissimilitudes that are between them are more, and of greater importance, than those things are wherein there seems to be an agreement between them. For,—1*st*, The soul and body are so united as to constitute *one entire nature.* The soul is not human nature, nor is the body, but it is the consequent of their union. Soul and body are essential parts of human nature; but complete human nature they are not but by virtue of their union. But the union of the natures in the person of Christ doth not constitute a new nature, that either was not or was not complete before. Each nature remains the same perfect, complete nature after this union. 2*dly*, The union of the soul and body doth constitute that nature which is made essentially complete thereby,—*a new individual person*, with a subsistence of its own, which neither of them was nor had before that union. But although the person of Christ, as God and man, be constituted by this union, yet his person absolutely, and his individual subsistence, was perfect absolutely antecedent unto that union. He did not become a new person, another person than he was before, by virtue of that union; only that person assumed human nature to itself to be its own, into personal subsistence. 3*dly*, Soul and body are united *by an external efficient cause*, or the power of God, and not by the act of one of them upon another. But this union is effected by that act of the divine nature towards the human which we have before described. 4*thly*, Neither soul nor body have any *personal subsistence before their union;* but the sole foundation of this union was in this, that the Son of God was a self-subsisting person from eternity.

(3.) There are *other unions* in things *natural*, which are by mixture of composition. Hereon something is produced composed of various parts, which is not what any of them are. And there is a *conversion* of things, when one thing is substantially changed into another,—as the water in the miracle that Christ wrought was turned into wine; but this union hath no resemblance unto any of them. There is not a κρᾶσις, "a mixture," a contemperation of the divine and human natures into *one third nature*, or the conversion of one into another. Such notions of these things some fancied of old. Eutyches[1] supposed such a composition and mixture of the two na-

[1] Eutyches was a presbyter and abbot at Constantinople, and distinguished himself by his opposition to the Nestorians, A.D. 448, asserting that in Christ there is but *one* nature, and was condemned by the General Council at Chalcedon, A.D. 451. In the preface to this work, p. 11, he is called "The Archimandrite." *Mandrite* is a Syriac word for "monk." Archimandrite corresponds with the term "abbot" in Europe.—Ed.

tures in the person of Christ, as that the human nature at least should lose all its essential properties, and have neither understanding nor will of its own. And some of the Arians fancied a substantial change of that created divine nature which they acknowledged, into the human. But these imaginations, instead of professing Christ to be God and man, would leave him indeed neither God nor man; and have been sufficiently confuted. Wherefore the union we treat of hath no similitude unto any such natural union as is the effect of composition or mutation.

(4.) There is an *artificial union* wherewith some have illustrated this mystery; as that of fire and iron in the same sword. The sword is one; the nature of fire and that of iron different;—and the *acts* of them distinct; the iron cuts, the fire burns;—and the *effects* distinct; cutting and burning; yet is the agent or instrument but *one sword.* Something of this nature may be allowed to be spoken in way of allusion; but it is a weak and imperfect representation of this mystery, on many accounts. For the *heat in iron* is rather an accident than a substance, is separable from it, and in sundry other things diverts the mind from due apprehensions of this mystery.

(5.) There is *a spiritual union,*—namely, of Christ and believers; or of God in Christ and believers, which is excellent and mysterious, —such as all other unions in nature are made use of in the Scripture to illustrate and represent. This some among us do judge to be of the same kind with that of the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. Only they say they differ in degrees. The eternal Word was so united unto the man Christ Jesus, as that thereby he was exalted inconceivably above all other men, though ever so holy, and had greater communications from God than any of them. Wherefore he was on many accounts the Son of God in a peculiar manner; and, by a communication of names, is called God also. This being the opinion of Nestorius,[1] revived again in the days wherein we live, I shall declare wherein he placed the conjunction or union of the two natures of Christ,—whereby he constituted two distinct persons of the Son of God and the Son of man, as these now do,—and briefly detect the vanity of it. For the whole of it consisted in the concession of sundry things that were true in particular, making use of the pretence of them unto the denial of that wherein alone the true union of the person of Christ did consist.

[1] Born at Germanicia, in the north of Syria—ordained a presbyter at Antioch—appointed patriarch of Constantinople A.D. 428—objected to the epithet Θεοτόκος, as applied to the Virgin Mary, because "that God should be born of a human being is impossible"—charged in consequence with maintaining that Christ was a mere man—held in reality the distinct *separation* of the divine and human natures of Christ, insisting on a connection between them by συνάφεια (junction), or ἐνοίκησις (indwelling), in opposition to ἕνωσις (union)—deposed by the Third General Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, and died probably before A.D. 450.—Ed.

Nestorius allowed the presence of the Son of God with the man Christ Jesus to consist in five things.

[1.] He said he was so present with him κατὰ παράστασιν, or by *inhabitation*, as a man dwells in a house or a ship to rule it. He dwelt in him as his temple. So he dwells in all that believe, but in him in a more especial manner. And this is true with respect unto that fulness of the Spirit whereby God was with him and in him; as he is with and in all believers, according unto the measures wherein they are made partakers of him. But this answers not that divine testimony, that in him dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. The fulness of the Godhead is the entire divine nature. This nature is considered in the person of the Son, or eternal Word; for it was the Word that was made flesh. And this could no otherwise dwell in him bodily, really, *substantially*, but in the assumption of that nature to be his own. And no sense can be given unto this assertion to preserve it from blasphemy,—that the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in any of the saints bodily.

[2.] He allowed an especial presence, κατὰ σχέσιν, as some call it; that is, by such a *union of affections* as is between intimate friends. The soul of God rested always in that man [Christ];—in him was he well pleased: and he was wholly given up in his affections unto God. This also is true; but there is that which is no less true, that renders it useless unto the pretensions of Nestorius. For he allowed the divine person of the Son of God. But whatever is spoken of this nature concerning the love of God unto the man Christ Jesus, and of his love to God, it is *the person of the Father* that is intended therein; nor can any one instance be given where it is capable of another interpretation. For it is still spoken of with reference unto the work that he was sent of the Father to accomplish, and his own delight therein.

[3.] He allowed it to be κάτ' ἀξίαν, *by way of dignity and honour*. For this conjunction is such, as that whatever honour is given unto the Son of God is also to be given unto that Son of man. But herein, to recompense his *sacrilege* in taking away the hypostatical union from the church, he would introduce *idolatry* into it. For the honour that is due unto the Son of God is divine, religious, or the owning of all essential divine properties in him, with a due subjection of soul unto him thereon. But to give this honour unto the man Christ Jesus, without a supposition of the subsistence of his human nature in the person of the Son of God, and solely on that account, is highly idolatrous.

[4.] He asserted it to be κατὰ ταυτοβουλίαν, or on the account of the *consent and agreement* that was between the will of God and the will of the man Christ Jesus. But no other union will thence ensue,

but what is between God and the angels in heaven; in whom there is a perfect compliance with the will of God in all things. Wherefore, if this be the foundation of this union, he might be said to take on him the nature of angels as well as the seed of Abraham; which is expressly denied by the apostle, Heb. ii. 16, 17.

[5.] Καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν, by an *equivocal denomination*, the name of the one person, namely, of the Son of God, being accommodated unto the other, namely, the Son of man. So they were called gods unto whom the word of God came. But this no way answers any one divine testimony wherein the name of God is assigned unto the Lord Christ,—as those wherein God is said "to lay down his life for us," and to "purchase his church with his own blood," to come and be "manifest in the flesh,"—wherein no homonymy or equivocation can take place. By all these ways he constituted a separable accidental union, wherein nothing in kind, but in degree only, was peculiar unto the man Christ Jesus.

But all these things, so far as they are true, belong unto the third thing to be considered in his person,—namely, the communion or mutual communication of the distinct natures therein. But his personal union consists not in any of them, nor in all of them together; nor do they answer any of the multiplied testimonies given by the Holy Ghost unto this glorious mystery. Some few of them may be mentioned.

"The Word was made flesh," John i. 14. There can be but two senses of these words. (1*st*,) That the Word ceased to be what it was, and was substantially turned into flesh. (2*dly*,) That continuing to be what it was, it was made to be also what before it was not. The first sense is destructive of the Divine Being and all its essential properties. The other can be verified only herein, that the Word took that flesh—that is, our human nature—to be his own, his own nature wherein he was made flesh; which is that we plead for. For this assertion, that the person of the Son took our nature to be his own, is the same with that of the assumption of the human nature into personal subsistence with himself. And the ways of the presence of the Son of God with the man Christ Jesus, before mentioned, do express nothing in answer unto this divine testimony, that "The Word was made flesh."

"Being in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient," Phil. ii. 6–8. That by his being "in the form of God," his participation in and of the same divine nature with the Father is intended, these men grant; and that herein he was a person distinct from him Nestorius of old acknowledged, though it be by ours denied. But they can fancy no distinction that shall bear the denomination and relation of Father and Son; but all is inevitably included

in it which we plead for under that name. This person "took on him the form of a servant,"—that is, the nature of man in the condition of a servant. For it is the same with his being made of a woman, made under the law; or taking on him the seed of Abraham. And this person became obedient. It was in the human nature, in the form of a servant, wherein he was obedient. Wherefore that human nature was the nature of that person,—a nature which he took on him and made his own, wherein he would be obedient. And that the human nature is the nature of the person of him who was in the form of God, is that hypostatical union which we believe and plead for.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called The mighty God," Isa. ix. 6. The child and the mighty God are the same person, or he that is "born a child" cannot be rightly called "The mighty God." And the truth of many other expressions in the Scripture hath its sole foundation in this hypostatical union. So the Son of God took on him "the seed of Abraham," was "made of a woman," did "partake of flesh and blood," was "manifest in the flesh." That he who was born of the blessed Virgin was "before Abraham,"—that he was made of the "seed of David according to the flesh,"—whereby God "purchased the church with his own blood,"—are all spoken of one and the same person, and are not true but on the account of the union of the two natures therein. And all those who plead for the accidental metaphorical union, consisting in the instances before mentioned, do know well enough that the true Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is opposed by them.

III. Concurrent with, and in part consequent unto, this *union*, is the *communion of the distinct natures of Christ hypostatically* united. And herein we may consider,—1. What is peculiar unto the Divine nature; 2. What is common unto both.

1. There is a threefold *communication* of the divine nature unto the human in this hypostatical union. (1.) Immediate in the person of the Son. This is subsistence. In itself it is ἀνυπόστατος,—that which hath not a subsistence of its own, which should give it individuation and distinction from the same nature in any other person. But it hath its subsistence in the person of the Son, which thereby is its own. The divine nature, as in that person, is its *suppositum*. (2.) By the Holy Spirit he filled that nature with an *all-fulness* of habitual grace; which I have at large explained elsewhere. (3.) In all the acts of his office, by the divine nature, he communicated *worth and dignity* unto what was acted in and by the human nature.

For that which some have for a long season troubled the church withal, about such a *real communication of the properties of the divine nature unto the human*, which should neither be a *transfusion* of them into it, so as to render it the subject of them, nor yet

consist in a *reciprocal denomination from* their mutual in-being in the same subject,—it is that which neither themselves do, nor can any other well understand.

2. Wherefore, concerning the communion of the natures in this personal union, three things are to be observed, which the Scripture, reason, and the ancient church, do all concur in.

(1.) *Each nature* doth preserve its own natural, essential properties, entirely unto and in itself; without mixture, without composition or confusion, without such a real communication of the one unto the other, as that the one should become the subject of the properties of the other. The Deity, in the abstract, is not made the humanity, nor on the contrary. The divine nature is not made temporary, finite, limited, subject to passion or alteration by this union; nor is the human nature rendered immense, infinite, omnipotent. Unless this be granted, there will not be two natures in Christ, a divine and a human; nor indeed either of them, but somewhat else, composed of both.

(2.) *Each nature operates in him according unto its essential properties.* The divine nature knows all things, upholds all things, rules all things, acts by its presence everywhere; the human nature was born, yielded obedience, died, and rose again. But it is the same person, the same Christ, that acts all these things,—the one nature being his no less than the other. Wherefore,—

(3.) *The perfect, complete work of Christ, in every act of his mediatory office,*—in all that he did as the King, Priest, and Prophet of the church,—in all that he did and suffered,—in all that he continueth to do for us, in or by virtue of whether nature soever it be done or wrought,—is not to be considered as the act of this or that nature in him alone, but it is the act and work of the whole person,—of him that is both God and man in one person. And this gives occasion,—

IV. Unto that variety of *enunciations* which is used in the Scripture concerning him; which I shall name only, and conclude.

1. Some things are spoken of the person of Christ, wherein the enunciation is verified with respect *unto one nature only;* as—"The Word was with God, and the Word was God," John i. 1;—"Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58;—"Upholding all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3. These things are all spoken of the person of Christ, but belong unto it on account of his divine nature. So is it said of him, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," Isa. ix. 6;—"A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isa. liii. 3. They are spoken of the person of Christ, but are verified in human nature only, and the person on the account thereof.

2. Sometimes that is spoken of the *person* which belongs not distinctly and originally unto either nature, but doth belong unto him on the account of their *union* in him,—which are the most direct enun-

ciations concerning the person of Christ. So is he said to be the Head, the King, Priest, and Prophet of the church; all which offices he bears, and performs the acts of them, not on the singular account of this or that nature, but of the *hypostatical* union of them both.

3. Sometimes his person being denominated from *one nature*, the properties and acts of the other are assigned unto it. So they "crucified the Lord of glory." He is the Lord of glory on the account of his divine nature only; thence is his person denominated when he is said to be crucified, which was in the human nature only. So God purchased his church "with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. The denomination of the person is from the divine nature only—he *is God;* but the act ascribed unto it, or what he did by his own blood, was of the human nature only. But the purchase that was made thereby was the work of the person as both God and man. So, on the other side, "The Son of man who is in heaven," John iii. 13. The denomination of the person is from the human nature only,—"The Son of man." That ascribed unto it was with respect unto the divine nature only,—"who is in heaven."

4. Sometimes the person being denominated from one nature, that is ascribed unto it which is common unto both; or else being denominated from both, that which is proper unto one only is ascribed unto him. See Rom. ix. 5; Matt. xxii. 42.

These kinds of enunciations the ancients expressed by ἐναλλαγή, "alteration;" ἀλλοίωσις, "permutation;" κοινότης, "communion;" τρόπος ἀντιδόσεως, "the manner of mutual position;" κοινωνία ἰδιωμάτων, "the communication of properties," and other the like expressions.

These things I have only mentioned, because they are commonly handled by others in their didactical and polemical discourses concerning the person of Christ, and could not well be here utterly omitted.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Exaltation of Christ, with his Present State and Condition in Glory during the Continuance of his Mediatory Office.

The apostle, describing the great mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh"—by several degrees of ascent, he carrieth it within the veil, and leaves it there in glory—ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ, 1 Tim. iii. 16; God was manifest in the flesh, and "received up into glory." This assumption of our Lord Jesus Christ into glory, or his glorious reception in heaven, with his state and condition therein, is a principal article of the faith of the church,—the great foundation of its hope and consolation in this world. This, also, we must therefore

consider in our meditations on the person of Christ, and the use of it in our religion.

That which I especially intend herein is his present state in heaven, in the discharge of his mediatory office, before the consummation of all things. Hereon doth the glory of God, and the especial concernment of the church, at present depend. For, at the end of this dispensation, he shall give up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, or cease from the administration of his mediatory office and power, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. xv. 24–28, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

All things fell by sin into an enmity unto the glory of God and the salvation of the church. The removal of this enmity, and the destruction of all enemies, is the work that God committed unto his Son in his incarnation and mediation, Eph. i. 10. This he was variously to accomplish in the administration of all his offices. The enmity between God and us immediately, he removed by the blood of his cross, whereby he made peace, Eph. ii. 14–16; which peace he continues and preserves by his intercession, Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1. The enemies themselves of the church's eternal welfare—namely, sin, death, the world, Satan, and hell—he subdues by his power. In the gradual accomplishment of this work—according as the church of the elect is brought forth in successive generations (in every one whereof the same work is to be performed)—he is to continue unto the end and consummation of all things. Until then the whole church will not be saved, and therefore his work not be finished. He will not cease his work whilst there is one of his elect to be saved, or one enemy to be subdued. He shall not faint nor give over until he hath sent forth judgment unto victory.

For the discharge of this work, he hath a *sovereign power* over all things in heaven and earth committed unto him. Herein he doth and must reign. And so absolutely is it vested in him, that upon the ceasing of the exercise of it, he himself is said to be made subject unto God. It is true that the Lord Christ, in his human nature, is always less than, or inferior unto, God, even the Father. In that sense he is in subjection unto him now in heaven. But yet he hath an actual exercise of divine power, wherein he is absolute and supreme. When

this ceaseth, he shall be subject unto the Father in that nature, and only so. Wherefore, when this work is perfectly fulfilled and ended, then shall all the mediatory actings of Christ cease for evermore. For God will then have completely finished the whole design of his wisdom and grace in the constitution of his person and offices, and have raised up and finished the whole fabric of eternal glory. Then will God "be all in all." In his own immense nature and blessedness he shall not only be "all" *essentially* and *causally*, but "in all" also; he shall immediately be *all* in and unto us.

This state of things—when God shall immediately "be all in all"—we can have no just comprehension of in this life. Some refreshing notions of it may be framed in our minds, from those apprehensions of the divine perfections which reason can attain unto; and their suitableness to yield eternal rest, satisfaction, and blessedness, in that enjoyment of them whereof our nature is capable. Howbeit, of these things in particular the Scripture is silent; however, it testifies our eternal reward and blessedness to consist alone in the enjoyment of God.

But there is somewhat else proposed as the immediate object of the faith of the saints at present, as unto what they shall enjoy upon their departure out of this world. And Scripture revelations extend unto the state of things unto the end of the world, and no longer.

Wherefore heaven is now principally represented unto us as the place of the residence and *glory of Jesus Christ in the administration of his office;* and our blessedness to consist in a participation thereof, and communion with him therein. So he prays for all them who are given him of his Father, that they may be where he is, to behold his glory, John xvii. 24. It is not the essential glory of his divine person that he intends, which is absolutely the same with that of the Father; but it is a glory that is peculiarly his own,—a glory which the Father hath given him, because he loved him: "My glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me." Nor is it merely the glorified state of his human nature that he intendeth; as was before declared in the consideration of the 5th verse of this chapter, where he prayeth for this glory. However, this is not excluded; for unto all those that love him, it will be no small portion of their blessed refreshment, to behold that individual nature wherein he suffered for them, undergoing all sorts of reproaches, contempts, and miseries, now unchangeably stated in incomprehensible glory. But *the glory which God gives unto Christ*, in the phrase of the Scripture, principally is *the glory of his exaltation in his mediatory office.* It is the "all power" that is given him in heaven and earth; the "name" that he hath "above every name," as he sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. In the beholding and contemplation hereof with holy joy and delight, consists no small part of that blessedness and glory which

the saints above at present enjoy, and which all others of them shall so do who depart this life before the consummation of all things. And in the due consideration hereof consists a great part of the exercise of that faith which is "the evidence of things not seen," and which, by making them present unto us, supplies the room of sight. This is the ground whereon our hope doth anchor,—namely, the things "within the veil," Heb. vi. 19, which directs us unto the temple administration of the mediatory office of Christ. And it is for the strengthening of our faith and hope in God, through him, that we do and that we ought to inquire into these things.

The consideration of the *present state of Christ in heaven* may be reduced unto three heads:—

I. *The glorification of his human nature;* what it hath in common with, and wherein it differs in kind from, the glory of all saints whatever.

II. *His mediatory exaltation;* or the especial glory of his person as mediator.

III. *The exercise and discharge of his office in this state of things:* which is what at present I shall principally inquire into. I shall not speak at all of the nature of glorified bodies, nor of anything that is *common* unto the human nature of Christ and the same nature in glorified saints; but only what is *peculiar* unto himself. And hereunto I shall premise one general observation.

All perfections whereof human nature is capable, abiding what it was in both the essential parts of it, soul and body, do belong unto the Lord Christ in his glorified state. To ascribe unto it what is inconsistent with its *essence*, is not an *assignation of glory* unto its state and condition, but a *destruction* of its *being*. To affix unto the human nature divine properties, as ubiquity or immensity, is to deprive it of its own. The essence of his body is no more changed than that of his soul. It is a fundamental article of faith, that he is in the same body in heaven wherein he conversed here on earth; as well as the faculties of his rational soul are continued the same in him. This is that "holy thing" which was framed immediately by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin. This is that "Holy One" which, when it was in the grave, saw no corruption. This is that "body" which was offered for us, wherein he bare our sins on the tree. To fancy any such change in or of this body, by its glorification, as that it should not continue essentially and substantially the same that it was, is to overthrow the faith of the church in a principal article of it. We believe that the very same body wherein he suffered for us, without any alteration as unto its substance, essence, or integral parts, and not another body, of an ethereal, heavenly structure, wherein is nothing of flesh, blood, or bones, by which

he so frequently testified the faithfulness of God in his incarnation, is still that temple wherein God dwells, and wherein he administers in the holy place not made with hands. The body which was pierced is that which all eyes shall see, and no other.

I. On this foundation I willingly allow all perfections in the glorified human nature of Christ, which are consistent with its real form and essence. I shall, therefore, only in some instances inquire into the *present glory* of the human nature of Christ, wherein it differs either in kind or degree from the glory of all other saints whatever. For even among them I freely allow different degrees in glory; which the eternal order of things—that is, the will of God, in the disposal of all things unto his own glory—doth require.

1. There is that wherein the present glory of the human nature of Christ differeth, *in kind and nature*, from that which any other of the saints are partakers of, or shall be so after the resurrection. And this is,—

(1.) *The eternal subsistence* of that nature of his in the person of the Son of God. As this belongs unto its dignity and honour, so it doth also unto its inherent glory. This is, and shall be, eternally peculiar unto him, in distinction from, and exaltation above, the whole creation of God, angels and men. Those by whom this is denied, instead of the glorious name whereby God doth call him,—"Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God," &c.,—do call him "Ichabod," "Where is the glory?" or, there is none that is peculiar unto him. But the mystery hereof, according unto our measure, and in answer unto our design, we have already declared. And this glory he had, indeed, in this world, from the first instant of his incarnation, or conception in the womb. But, as unto the demonstration of it, "he emptied himself," and made himself of no reputation, under the form of a servant. But now the glory of it is illustriously displayed in the sight of all his holy ones. Some inquire, whether the saints in heaven do perfectly comprehend the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God? I do not well understand what is meant by "*perfectly comprehend;*" but this is certain, that what we have now by faith, we shall have there by sight. For as we live now by faith, so shall we there by sight. No finite creature can have an absolute comprehension of that which is infinite. We shall never search out the Almighty to perfection, in any of his works of infinite wisdom. Wherefore this only I shall say, there is such a satisfactory evidence in heaven, not only of the truth, but also of the nature of this mystery, as that the glory of Christ therein is manifest, as an eternal object of divine adoration and honour. The enjoyment of heaven is usually called the *beatifical vision;* that is, such an intellectual present view, apprehension, and sight of God and his glory, especially as manifested in

Christ, as will make us blessed unto eternity. Wherefore, in the contemplation of this mystery doth a great part of our blessedness consist; and farther our thoughts cannot attain. This is that wherein the glory of the human nature of Christ doth essentially excel, and differ from that of any other blessed creature whatever. And hereon other things do depend. For,—

(2.) Hence *the union of the human nature of Christ unto God*, and the communications of God unto it, are of another kind than those of the blessed saints. In these things—namely, our union with God and his communications unto us—do our blessedness and glory consist.

In this world, believers are united unto God by *faith*. It is by faith that they cleave unto him with purpose of heart. In heaven, it shall be by *love*. Ardent love, with delight, complacency, and joy, from a clear apprehension of God's infinite goodness and beauty, now made present unto us, now enjoyed by us, shall be the principle of our eternal adherence unto him, and union with him. His communications unto us here are by an external efficiency of power. He communicates of himself unto us, in the effects of his goodness, grace, and mercy, by the operations of his Spirit in us. Of the same kind will all the communications of the divine nature be unto us, unto all eternity. It will be by what he *worketh in us* by his Spirit and power. There is no other way of the emanation of virtue from God unto any creature. But these things in Christ are of another nature. This union of his human nature unto God is *immediate*, in the person of the Son; ours is *mediate*, by the Son, as clothed with our nature. The way of the communications of the divine nature unto the human in his person is what we cannot comprehend; we have no notion of it,—nothing whereby it may be illustrated. There is nothing equal to it, nothing like it, in all the works of God. As it is a creature, it must subsist in eternal dependence on God; neither hath it anything but what it receives from him. For this belongs essentially unto the divine nature, to be the only independent, eternal spring and fountain of all being and goodness. Nor can Omnipotency itself exalt a creature into any such condition as that it should not always and in all things depend absolutely on the Divine Being. But as unto the way of the communications between the divine and human nature, in the personal union, we know it not. But whether they be of life, power, light, or glory, they are of another kind than that whereby we do or shall receive all things. For all things are given unto us, are wrought in us, as was said, by an external efficiency of power. The glorious immediate emanations of virtue, from the divine unto the human nature of Christ, we understand not. Indeed, the actings of natures of different kinds, where both are finite, in the same person, one towards the other, is of a difficult apprehension. Who knows how

directive power and efficacy proceeds from the soul, and is communicated unto the body, unto every the least minute action, in every member of it,—so as that there is no distance between the direction and the action, or the accomplishment of it? or how, on the other hand, the soul is affected with sorrow or trouble in the moment wherein the body feeleth pain, so as that no distinction can be made between the body's sufferings and the soul's sorrow? How much more is this mutual communication in the same person of diverse natures above our comprehension, where one of them is absolutely infinite! Somewhat will be spoken to it afterward. And herein doth this eternal glory differ from that of all other glorified creatures whatever. And,—

(3.) Hence the human nature of Christ, in his divine person and together with it, is the object of *all divine adoration* and worship, Rev. v. 13. All creatures whatever do for ever ascribe "blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto the Lamb," in the same manner as unto him who sits on the throne. This we have declared before. But no other creature either is, or ever can be, exalted into such a condition of glory as to be the object of any divine worship, from the meanest creature which is capable of the performance of it. Those who ascribe divine or religious honour unto the saints or angels, as is done in the Church of Rome, do both rob Christ of the principal flower of his imperial crown, and sacrilegiously attempt to adorn others with it;—which they abhor.

(4.) The *glory that God designed to accomplish in and by him*, is now made evident unto all the holy ones that are about the throne. The great design of the wisdom and grace of God, from eternity, was to declare and manifest all the holy, glorious properties of his nature, in and by Jesus Christ. And this is that wherein he will acquiesce, with which he is well pleased. When this is fully accomplished, he will use no other way or means for the manifestation of his glory. Herein is the end and blessedness of all.

Wherefore the principal work of faith, whilst we are in this world, is to behold this glory of God, as so represented unto us in Christ. In the exercise of faith therein is our conformity unto him carried on unto perfection, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And unto this end, or that we may do so, he powerfully communicates unto our minds a saving, internal light; without which we can neither behold his glory nor give glory unto him. He "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," shines into our hearts, to give us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. The end, I say, why God communicates a spiritual, supernatural light unto the minds of believers, is that they may be able to discern the manifestation and revelation of his glory in Christ; which is hid from the

world, Eph. i. 17–19; Col. ii. 2. Howbeit, whilst we are here, we see it but "darkly as in a glass;" it is not evident unto us in its own lustre and beauty. Yea, the remainder of our darkness herein is the cause of all our weakness, fears, and disconsolations. Want of a steady view of this glory of God, is that which exposeth us unto impressions from all our temptations. And the light of our minds therein is that whereby we are changed and transformed into the likeness of Christ.

But in *heaven* this is conspicuously and gloriously manifest unto all the blessed ones that are before the throne of God. They do not behold it by faith in various degrees of light, as we do here below. They have not *apprehensions* of some impressions of divine glory on the person of Christ and the human nature therein, with the work which he did perform; which is the utmost of our attainment. But they behold *openly* and *plainly* the whole glory of God, all the characters of it, illustriously manifesting themselves in him, in what he is, in what he hath done, in what he doth. Divine wisdom, grace, goodness, love, power, do all shine forth in him unto the contemplation of all his saints, in whom he is admired. And in the vision hereof consists no small part of our eternal blessedness. For what can be more satisfactory, more full of glory unto the souls of believers, than clearly to comprehend the mystery of the wisdom, grace, and love of God in Christ? This is that which the prophets, at a great distance, inquired diligently into,—that which the angels bow down to look towards,—that whose declaration is the life and glory of the Gospel. To behold in one view the reality, the substance of all that was typified and represented by the beautiful fabric of the Tabernacle, and Temple which succeeded in the room thereof,—of all the utensils of them, and services performed in them,—all that the promises of the Old Testament did contain, or the declarations of the New;—as it is the most satisfactory, blessed, and glorious state, that by the present light of faith we can desire or long for, so it evidenceth a glory in Christ of *another kind and nature* than what any creature can be participant in. I shall therefore state it unto our consideration, with some few observations concerning it.

[1.] *Every believer seeth here in this life an excellency, a glory in the mystery of God in Christ.* They do so in various degrees, unless it be in times of temptation, when any of them walk in darkness, and have no light. The view and prospect hereinto is far more clear, and accompanied with more evidence, in some than in others, according unto the various degrees of their faith and light. The spiritual sight of some is very weak, and their views of the glory of God in Christ are much obscured with inevidence, darkness, and instability. This in many is occasioned by the weakness of their natural ability, in more by spiritual sloth and negligence,—in that they have not

habitually "exercised their senses to discern good and evil," as the apostle speaks, Heb. v. 14. Some want instruction, and some have their minds corrupted by false opinions. Howbeit, all true believers have the "eyes of their understanding opened" to discern, in some measure, the glory of God, as represented to them in the Gospel. Unto others it is foolishness; or they think there is that darkness in it whereunto they cannot approach. But all the darkness is in themselves. This is the distinguishing property and character of saving faith—it beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;—it makes us to discern the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, as declared in the Gospel.

[2.] Our apprehension of this glory is *the spring of all our obedience*, consolation, and hope in this world. Faith discovering this manifestation of the glory of God in Christ, engageth the soul unto universal obedience, as finding therein abundant reason for it and encouragement unto it. Then is obedience truly evangelical, when it ariseth from this acting of faith, and is thereon accompanied with liberty and gratitude. And herein is laid all the foundation of our consolations for the present and hope for the future. For the whole security of our present and future condition depends on the actings of God towards us, according as he hath manifested himself in Christ.

[3.] From the exercise of faith herein doth *divine love*, love unto God, proceed; therein alone it is enlivened and inflamed. On these apprehensions doth a believing soul cry out, "How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!" God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is the only object of divine love. Under that representation of him alone can the soul cleave unto him with ardent love, constant delight, and intense affections. All other notions of love unto God in sinners, as we are all, are empty fancies. Wherefore,—

[4.] All believers are, or should be, conversant in their minds about these things, with longings, expectations, and desires after nearer *approaches* unto them, and enjoyments of them. And if we are not so, we are earthly, carnal, and unspiritual; yea, the want of this frame—the neglect of this duty—is the sole cause why many professors are so carnal in their minds, and so worldly in their conversations. But this is the state of them who live in the due exercise of faith,—this they pant and breathe after,—namely, that they may be delivered from all darkness, unstable thoughts, and imperfect apprehensions of the glory of God in Christ. After these things do those who have received the "first-fruits of the Spirit," groan within themselves. This glory they would behold "with open face;" not, as at present, "in a glass," but in its own beauty. What do we want? what would we be at? what do our souls desire? Is it not that we might have a more full, clear, stable comprehension of the wisdom,

love, grace, goodness, holiness, righteousness, and power of God, as declared and exalted in Christ unto our redemption and eternal salvation? To see the glory of God in Christ, to understand his love unto him and valuation of him, to comprehend his nearness unto God,—all evidenced in his mediation,—is that which he hath promised unto us, and which we are pressing after. See John xvii. 23, 24.

[5.] Heaven will satisfy all those desires and expectations. To have them fully satisfied, is heaven and eternal blessedness. This fills the souls of them who are already departed in the faith, with admiration, joy, and praises. See Rev. v. 9, 10. Herein is the glory of Christ absolutely of another kind and nature than that of any other creature whatever. And from hence it is that our glory shall principally consist in beholding his glory, because the whole glory of God is manifested in him.

And, by the way, we may see hence the *vanity* as well as the *idolatry* of them who would represent Christ in glory as the object of our adoration in pictures and images. They fashion wood or stone into the likeness of a man. They adorn it with colours and flourishes of art, to set it forth unto the senses and fancies of superstitious persons as having a resemblance of glory. And when they have done, "they lavish gold out of the bag," as the prophet speaks, in various sorts of supposed ornaments,—such as are so only to the vainest sort of mankind,—and so propose it as an image or resemblance of Christ in glory. But what is there in it that hath the least respect thereunto,—the least likeness of it? nay, is it not the most effectual means that can be devised to divert the minds of men from true and real apprehensions of it? Doth it teach anything of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ in the person of the Son of God? nay, doth it not obliterate all thoughts of it! What is represented thereby of the union of it unto God, and the immediate communications of God unto it? Doth it declare the manifestation of all the glorious properties of the divine nature in him? One thing, indeed, they ascribe unto it that is proper unto Christ,—namely, that it is to be adored and worshipped; whereby they add idolatry unto their folly. Persons who know not what it is to live by faith—whose minds are never raised by spiritual, heavenly contemplations, who have no design in religion but to gratify their inward superstition by their outward senses—may be pleased for a time, and ruined for ever, by these delusions. Those who have real faith in Christ, and love unto him, have a more glorious object for their exercise.

And we may hereby examine both our own *notions of the state of glory* and our preparations for it, and whether we are in any measure "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." More grounds of this trial will be afterward suggested; these laid down may not

be passed by. Various are the thoughts of men about the future state,—the things which are not seen, which are eternal. Some rise no higher but unto hopes of escaping hell, or everlasting miseries, when they die. Yet the heathen had their Elysian fields, and Mohammed his sensual paradise. Others have apprehensions of I know not what glistering glory, that will please and satisfy them, they know not how, when they can be here no longer. But this state is quite of another nature, and the blessedness of it is spiritual and intellectual. Take an instance in one of the things before laid down. The glory of heaven consists in the full manifestation of divine wisdom, goodness, grace, holiness,—of all the properties of the nature of God in Christ. In the clear perception and constant contemplation hereof consists no small part of eternal blessedness. What, then, are our present thoughts of these things? What joy, what satisfaction have we in the sight of them, which we have by faith through divine revelation? What is our desire to come unto the perfect comprehension of them? How do we like this heaven? What do we find in ourselves that will be eternally satisfied hereby? According as our desires are after them, such and no other are our desires of the true heaven,—of the residence of blessedness and glory. Neither will God bring us unto heaven whether we will or no. If, through the ignorance and darkness of our minds,—if, through the earthliness and sensuality of our affections,—if, through a fulness of the world, and the occasions of it,—if, by the love of life and our present enjoyments, we are strangers unto these things, we are not conversant about them, we long not after them,—we are not in the way towards their enjoyment. The present satisfaction we receive in them by faith, is the best evidence we have of an indefeasible interest in them. How foolish is it to lose the first-fruits of these things in our own souls,—those entrances into blessedness which the contemplation of them through faith would open unto us,—and hazard our everlasting enjoyment of them by an eager pursuit of an interest in perishing things here below! This, this is that which ruins the souls of most, and keeps the faith of many at so low an ebb, that it is hard to discover any genuine working of it.

2. The glory of the human nature of Christ differs from that of the saints after the resurrection, in things which concern the *degrees* of it. For,—

(1.) The glory of his body is the example and pattern of what they shall be conformed unto: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. iii. 21. Our bodies were made vile by the entrance of sin; thence they became brothers to the worms, and sisters unto corruption. To

death and the grave, with rottenness and corruption therein, they are designed. At the resurrection they shall be new-framed, fashioned, and moulded. Not only all the detriment and disadvantage they received by the entrance of sin shall be removed, but many additions of glorious qualifications, which they had not in their primitive, natural constitution, shall be added unto them. And this shall be done by the almighty power of Christ,—that working or exercise of it whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. But of this state whereinto we shall be changed by the power of Christ, his own body is the pattern and example. A similitude of it is all that we shall attain unto. And that which is the idea and exemplar in any state, is the rule and standard unto all others. Such is the glory of Christ;—ours consists in conformity thereunto; which gives him the pre-eminence.

(2.) As the state of his body is more glorious than ours shall be, so will that of his soul in itself be made appear to be more excellent than what we are capable of. For that fulness of the Spirit without measure and of all grace, which his nature was capacitated for by virtue of the hypostatical union, doth now shine forth in all excellency and glory. The grace that was in Christ in this world is the same with that which is in him now in heaven. The nature of it was not changed when he ceased to be *viator*, but is only brought into a more glorious exercise now he is *comprehensor*. And all his graces are now made manifest, the veil being taken from them, and light communicated to discern them. As, in this world, he had unto the most neither form nor comeliness for which he should be desired,—partly from the veil which was cast on his inward beauty from his outward condition, but principally from the darkness which was on their minds, whereby they were disenabled to discern the glory of spiritual things; (notwithstanding which, some then, in the light of faith, "beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;)"—so now the veil is removed, and the darkness wholly taken away from the minds of the saints, he is in the glory of his grace altogether lovely and desirable. And although the grace which is in believers be of the same nature with that which is in Christ Jesus, and shall be changed into glory after the likeness of his; yet is it, and always shall be, incomprehensibly short of what dwells in him. And herein also doth his glory gradually [greatly?] excel that of all other creatures whatever.

But we must here draw a veil over what yet remains. For it doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be; much less is it evident what are, and what will be, the glories of the Head above all the members,—even then when we shall "be made like unto him." But it must be remembered, that whereas, at the entrance of this discourse,

we so proposed the consideration of the present state of the Lord Christ in heaven, as that which should have an "end at the consummation of all things;" what hath been spoken concerning the glory of his human nature in itself, is not of that kind but what abideth unto eternity. All the things mentioned abide in him and unto him for evermore.

II. The second thing to be considered in the present state and condition of Christ is his *mediatory exaltation.* And two things with respect thereunto may be inquired into: 1. The way of his entrance into that state above; 2. The state itself, with the glory of it.

1. The way of his entrance into the exercise of his mediatory office in heaven is expressed, 1 Tim. iii. 16, He was "received up into glory," or rather gloriously; and he entered "into his glory," Luke xxiv. 26. This assumption and entrance into glory was upon his ascension, described Acts i. 9–11. "He was taken up into heaven," ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ, by an act of divine power; and he went into heaven, εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν, in his own choice and will, as that which he was exalted unto. And this ascension of Christ in his human nature into heaven is a fundamental article of the faith of the church. And it falls under a double consideration: (1.) As it was *triumphant,* as he was a *King;* (2.) As it was *gracious,* as he was a *Priest.* His ascension, as unto change of place, from earth to heaven, and as unto the outward manner of it, was one and the same, and at once accomplished; but as unto the end of it, which is the exercise of all his offices, it had various respects, various prefigurations, and is distinctly proposed unto us with reference unto them.

(1.) In his ascension, as it was triumphant, three things may be considered: 1*st,* The *manner* of it, with its representation of old; 2*dly,* The *place* whereinto he ascended; 3*dly,* The *end* of it, or what was the work which he had to do thereon.

[1.] As unto the manner of it, it was *openly triumphant* and glorious. So is it described, Eph. iv. 8, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." And respect is had unto the prefiguration of it at the giving of the law, Ps. lxviii. 17, 18, where the glory of it is more fully expressed, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive," &c. The most glorious appearance of God upon the earth, under the Old Testament, was that on Mount Sinai, in the giving of the law. And as his presence was there attended with all his glorious angels, so, when, upon the finishing of that work, he returned or ascended into heaven, it was in the way of a triumph with all that royal attendance. And this prefigured the ascent of Christ into heaven, upon his fulfilling of the law, all that

was required in it, or signified by it. He ascended triumphantly after he had given the law, as a figure of his triumphant ascent after he had fulfilled it. Having then "spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them," Col. ii. 15. So he led captivity captive; or all the adverse powers of the salvation of the church, in triumph at his chariot wheels. I deny not but that his leading "captivity captive" principally respects his spiritual conquest over Satan, and the destruction of his power; yet, whereas he is also said to "spoil principalities and powers, making a show of them openly," and triumphing over them, I no way doubt but Satan, the head of the apostasy, and the chief princes of darkness, were led openly, in sight of all the holy angels, as conquered captives,—the "seed of the woman" having now bruised the "head of the serpent." This is that which is so emphatically expressed, Ps. xlvii. throughout. The ground and cause of all the triumphant rejoicing of the church, therein declared, is, that God was "gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet," verse 5; which is nothing but the glorious ascent of Christ into heaven, said to be accompanied with shouts and the sound of a trumpet, the expressions of triumphant rejoicing, because of the glorious acclamations that were made thereon, by all the attendants of the throne of God.

[2.] The *place* whither he thus ascended is on high. "He ascended up on high," Eph. iv. 8,—that is, heaven. He went "into heaven," Acts i. 11,—and the "heaven must receive him," chap. iii. 21; not these aspectable heavens which we behold,—for in his ascension "he passed through them," [1] Heb. iv. 14, and is made "higher than they," chap. vii. 26,—but into the place of the residence of God in glory and majesty, chap. i. 3, viii. 1, xii. 2. There, on "the throne of God," Rev. iii. 21,—"on the right hand of the Majesty on high,"—he sits down in the full possession and exercise of all power and authority. This is the palace of this King of saints and nations. There is his royal eternal throne, Heb. i. 8. And "many crowns" are on his head, Rev. xix. 12,—or all dignity and honour. And he who, in a pretended imitation of him, wears a triple crown, hath upon his own head thereby, "the name of blasphemy," Rev. xiii. 1. There are before him his "sceptre of righteousness," his "rod of iron,"—all the regalia of his glorious kingdom. For by these *emblems* of power doth the Scripture represent unto us his sovereign, divine authority in the execution of his kingly office. Thus he ascended triumphantly, having conquered his enemies; thus he reigneth gloriously over all.

[3.] The *end* for which he thus triumphantly ascended into heaven,

[1] The expression quoted by Dr Owen is founded upon the phrase in the original language, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανούς "having passed *through*," not "*into* the heavens," as it stands in our version.—Ed.

is twofold:—1*st*, The overturning and destruction of all his enemies in all their remaining powers. He rules them "with a rod of iron," and in his due time will "dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel," Ps. ii. 9; for he must "reign until all his enemies are made his footstool," 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26; Ps. cx. 1. Although at present, for the most part, they despise his authority, yet they are all absolutely in his power, and shall fall under his eternal displeasure. 2*dly*, The preservation, continuation, and rule of his church, both as unto the *internal* state of the souls of them that believe, and the *external* order of the church in its worship and obedience, and its preservation under and from all oppositions and persecutions in this world. There is in each of these such a continual exercise of divine wisdom, power, and care,—the effects of them are so great and marvellous, and the fruits of them so abundant unto the glory of God,—that the world would "not contain the books that might be written" of them; but to handle them distinctly is not our present design.

(2.) His ascension may be considered as *gracious*, as the ascent of a *High Priest*. And herein the things before mentioned are of a distinct consideration.

[1.] As to the *manner* of it, and the design of it, he gives an account of them himself, John xx. 17. His design herein was not the taking on him the exercise of his power, kingdom, and glorious rule; but the acting with God on the behalf of his disciples. "I go," saith he, "to my Father, and to your Father; to my God, and to your God,"—not his God and Father with respect unto eternal generation, but as he was their God and Father also. And he was so, as he was their God and Father in the same covenant with himself; wherein he was to procure of God all good things for them. Through the blood of this everlasting covenant—namely, his own blood, whereby this covenant was established, and all the good things of it secured unto the church—he was "brought again from the dead," that he might live ever to communicate them unto the church, Heb. xiii. 20, 21. With this design in his ascension, and the effects of it, did he often comfort and refresh the hearts of his disciples, when they were ready to faint on the apprehensions of his leaving of them here below, John xiv. 1, 2, xvi. 5–7. And this was typified by the ascent of the high priest unto the temple of old. The temple was situated on a hill, high and steep, so as that there was no approach unto it but by stairs. Hence in their wars it was looked on as a most impregnable fortress. And the solemn ascent of the high priest into it on the day of expiation, had a resemblance of this ascent of Christ into heaven. For after he had offered the sacrifices in the outward court, and made atonement for sin, he entered into the most holy place,—a type of heaven itself, as the apostle declares, Heb. ix. 24,—of heaven, as it was

the place whereinto our High Priest was to enter. And it was a *joyful* ascent, though not *triumphant*. All the Psalms, from the 120th to the 134th inclusively, whose titles are שִׁירֵי הַמַּעֲלוֹת, "Songs of Degrees," or rather ascents or risings—being generally songs of praise and exhortations to have respect unto the sanctuary—were sung to God at the resting-places of that ascent. Especially was this represented on the day of jubilee. The proclamation of the jubilee was on the same day that the high priest entered into the holy place; and at the same time,—namely, on the "tenth day of the seventh month," Lev. xvi. 29, xxv. 9. Then did the trumpet sound throughout the land, the whole church; and liberty was proclaimed unto all servants, captives, and such as had sold their possessions, that they might return unto them again. This being a great type of the spiritual deliverance of the church, the noise of the trumpet was called "The joyful sound," Ps. lxxxix. 15, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." Those who are made partakers of spiritual deliverance, shall walk before God in a sense of his love and grace. This is the ascent of our High Priest into his sanctuary, when he proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified," Isa. lxi. 2, 3. For in this ascension of Christ, proclamation was made in the Gospel, of mercy, pardon, peace, joy, and everlasting refreshments, unto all that were distressed by sin, with a communication of righteousness unto them, to the eternal glory of God. Such was the entrance of our High Priest into heaven, with acclamations of joy and praise unto God.

[2.] The *place* whereinto he thus entered was *the sanctuary above*, the "tabernacle not made with hands," Heb. ix. 11. It was into heaven itself, not absolutely, but as it is the temple of God, as the throne of grace and mercy-seat are in it; which must farther be spoken unto immediately.

[3.] The *end* why the Lord Christ thus ascended, and thus entered into the holy place, was "to appear in the presence of God for us," and to "make intercession for all that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 26, 27, ix. 24, 25.

He ascended triumphantly into heaven, as Solomon ascended into his glorious throne of judgment described 1 Kings x. 18–20. As David was the type of his conquest over all the enemies of his church, so was Solomon of his glorious reign. The types were multiplied because of their imperfection. Then came unto him the queen of Sheba, the type of the Gentile converts and the church; when נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים, the

"voluntaries of the people," (those made willing in the day of his power, Ps. cx. 3,) "gathered themselves to the people of the God of Abraham," and were taken in his covenant, Ps. xlvii. 9—margin. But he ascended graciously, as the high priest went into the holy place; not to rule all things gloriously with mighty power, not to use his *sword* and his *sceptre*—but to appear as *an high priest, in a garment down to the foot, and a golden girdle about his paps*, Rev. i. 13,—as in a tabernacle, or temple, before a throne of grace. His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high adds to the glory of his priestly office, but belongs not unto the execution of it. So it was prophesied of him, that he should be "a priest upon his throne," Zech. vi. 13.

It may be added hereunto, that when he thus left this world and ascended into glory, the great promise he made unto his disciples—as they were to be preachers of the gospel, and in them unto all that should succeed them in that office—was, that he would "send the Holy Spirit unto them," to teach and guide them, to lead them into all truth,—to declare unto them the mysteries of the will, grace, and love of God, for the use of the whole church. This he promised to do, and did, in the discharge of his prophetical office. And although his giving "gifts unto men" was an act of his kingly power, yet it was for the end of his prophetical office.

From what hath been spoken, it is evident that the Lord Christ "ascended into heaven," or was received up into glory, with this design,—namely, to exercise his office of mediation in the behalf of the church, until the end should be. As this was his grace, that when he was *rich*, for our sakes he became *poor;* so when he was made rich again for his own sake, he lays forth all the riches of his glory and power on our behalf.

2. The *glory* of the state and condition whereinto Christ thus entered is the next thing to be considered; for he is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And as his ascension, with the ends of it, were twofold, or of a double consideration, so was his glory that ensued thereon. For his present mediatory state consists either in the glory of his *power* and *authority*, or in the glory of his *love* and *grace*,—his glory as a King, or his glory as a Priest. For the first of these, or his royal glory, in sovereign power and authority over the whole creation of God,—all in heaven and earth, persons and things, angels and men, good and bad, alive and dead,—all things spiritual and eternal, grace, gifts, and glory;—his *right* and *power*, or ability to dispose of all things according unto his will and pleasure, I have so fully and distinctly declared it, in my exposition on Heb. i. 3, as that I shall not here again insist upon it. His present glory, in the way of *love* and *grace*,—his glory as a Priest,—will be manifested in what doth ensue.

CHAPTER XX.

The Exercise of the Mediatory Office of Christ in Heaven.

III. The third and last thing which we proposed unto consideration, in our inquiry into the present state and condition of the person of Christ in heaven, is *the exercise and discharge of his mediatory office* in behalf of the church;—especially as he continueth to be a "minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

All Christians acknowledge that his *present state* is a state of the highest glory,—of exaltation above the whole creation of God, above every name that is or can be named; and hereon they esteem their own honour and safety to depend. Neither do they doubt of his power, but take it for granted that he can do whatever he pleaseth; which is the ground of their placing all their confidence in him. But we must show, moreover, that his present state is a *state of office-power*, work, and duty. He leads not in heaven a life of mere glory, majesty, and blessedness, but a life of office, love, and care also. He lives as the *Mediator* of the church; as the King, Priest, and Prophet thereof. Hereon do our present safety and our future eternal salvation depend. Without the continual actings of the *office-power* and care of Christ, the church could not be preserved one moment. And the darkness of our faith herein is the cause of all our disconsolations, and most of our weaknesses in obedience. Most men have only general and confused notions and apprehensions of the present state of Christ, with respect unto the church. And by some, all considerations of this nature are despised and derided. But revealed things belong unto us; especially such as are of so great importance unto the glory of God and the saving of our own souls,—such as this is, concerning the present state of the person of Christ in heaven, with respect unto his office-power and care.

Thus he is at once represented in all his offices, Rev. v. 6, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The whole representation of the glory of God, with all his holy attendants, is here called his "throne;" whence Christ is said to be in the "midst" of it. And this he is in his kingly glory; with respect also whereunto he is said to have "seven horns," or perfect power for the accomplishment of his will. And with respect unto his sacerdotal office, he is represented as a "Lamb that had been slain;" it being the virtue of his oblation that is con-

tinually effectual for the salvation of the church. For, as the "Lamb of God,"—in the offering of himself,—he "taketh away the sin of the world." And as a prophet he is said to have "seven eyes," which are "the seven Spirits of God;" or a perfect fulness of all spiritual light and wisdom in himself, with a power for the communication of gifts and grace for the illumination of the church.

The nature of these *offices* of Christ, what belongs unto them and their discharge, as was before intimated, I have declared elsewhere. I do now no farther consider them but as they relate unto the present state and condition of the person of Christ in heaven. And because it would be too long a work to treat of them all distinctly, I shall confine myself unto the consideration of his priestly office, with what depends thereon. And with respect thereunto the things ensuing may be observed.

1. The Lord Christ entered into heaven, the place of the residence of the glory of God, as into a *temple*, a tabernacle, a place of sacred worship. He did so as the high priest of the church, Heb. ix. 24. He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He is entered into heaven, as it was figured by the tabernacle of old; which was the place of all sacred and solemn worship. And therefore is he said to enter into it "through the veil," Heb. vi. 19, 20, x. 19, 20; which was the way of entrance into the most holy place, both in the tabernacle and temple. Heaven is not only a palace, a throne, as it is God's throne, Matt. v. 34; but it is a temple, wherein God dwells, not only in majesty and power, but in grace and mercy. It is the seat of ordinances and solemn worship. So is it represented, Rev. vii. 15, 17. It is said of the whole number of the saints above that have passed through the tribulations of this world, that they are "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them;" and "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water." See also chap. viii. 1–4. The worship of the church below may also be herein comprised; but it is by virtue of communion with that above. This is that heaven which the souls of believers do long for an entrance into. Other apprehensions of it are but uncertain speculations.

2. In this temple, this sanctuary, the Lord Christ continueth gloriously *to minister before the throne of grace*, in the discharge of his office. See Heb. iv. 14–16, ix. 24. As the high priest went into the holy place to minister for the church unto God, before the ark and mercy-seat, which were types of the throne of grace; so doth our High Priest act for us in the real presence of God. He did not enter the holy place only to reside there in a way of glory, but to do temple-

work, and to give unto God all that glory, honour, and worship, which he will receive from the church. And we may consider, both—(1.) *What* this work is, and (2.) *How* it is performed.

(1.) In general; herein Christ exerteth and exerciseth all his *love, compassion, pity,* and *care* towards the church, and every member of it. This are we frequently called unto the consideration of, as the foundation of all our consolation, as the fountain of all our obedience. See Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15, 16, v. 2. Thoughts hereof are the relief of believers in all their distresses and temptations; and the effects of it are all their supplies of grace, enabling them to persevere in their obedience. He doth appear for them as the great representative of the church, to transact all their affairs with God. And that for three ends.

First, To *make effectual the atonement* that he hath made for sin. By the continual representation of it, and of himself as a "Lamb that had been slain," he procures the application of the virtues and benefits of it, in reconciliation and peace with God, unto their souls and consciences. Hence are all believers sprinkled and washed with his blood in all generations,—in the application of the virtues of it unto them, as shed for them.

Secondly, To undertake their *protection,* and to plead their cause against all the accusations of Satan. He yet accuseth and chargeth them before God; but Christ is their advocate at the throne of grace, effectually frustrating all his attempts, Rev. xii. 10; Zech. iii. 2.

Thirdly, To *intercede* for them, as unto the communication of all grace and glory, all supplies of the Spirit, the accomplishment of all the promises of the covenant towards them, 1 John ii. 1, 2. This is the work of Christ in heaven. In these things, as the high priest of the church, doth he continue to administer his mediatory office on their behalf. And herein is he attended with the songs and joyful acclamations of all the holy ones that are in the presence of God, giving glory to God by him.

(2.) As unto the *manner* of this glorious administration, sundry things are to be considered.

[1.] That this transaction of things in heaven, being in the temple of God, and before the throne of grace, is a solemn instituted worship at present, which shall cease at the end of the world. Religious worship it is, or that wherein and whereby all the saints above do give glory to God. And it is instituted worship, not that which is merely natural, in that it is God's especial appointment, in and by Christ the mediator. It is a church-state which is constituted hereby, wherein these glorious ordinances are celebrated; and such a state as shall not be eternal, but hath its time allotted unto it. And believers at present have, by faith, an admission into communion with

this church above, in all its divine worship. For we "are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 22–24. A church-state doth the apostle most expressly represent unto us. It is Zion, Jerusalem, the great assembly,—the names of the church-state under the Old Testament. And it is a state above, the *heavenly* Jerusalem, where are all the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect in themselves, though not in their state as to the restitution of their bodies at the resurrection. And a holy worship is there in this great assembly; for not only is Jesus in it as the mediator of the covenant, but there is the "blood of sprinkling" also, in the effectual application of it unto the church. Hereinto have we an entrance. In this holy assembly and worship have we communion by faith whilst we are here below, Heb. x. 19–22. O that my soul might abide and abound in this exercise of faith!—that I might yet enjoy a clearer prospect of this glory, and inspection into the beauty and order of this blessed assembly! How inconceivable is the representation that God here makes of the glory of his wisdom, love, grace, goodness, and mercy, in Christ! How excellent is the manifestation of the glory and honour of Christ in his person and offices!—the glory given him by the Father! How little a portion do we know, or can have experience in, of the refreshing, satiating communications of divine love and goodness, unto all the members of this assembly; or of that unchangeable delight in beholding the glory of Christ, and of God in him,—of that ardency of affections wherewith they cleave unto him, and continual exultation of spirit, whereby they triumph in the praises of God, that are in all the members of it! To enter into this assembly by faith,—to join with it in the assignation of praises unto "him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore,"—to labour after a frame of heart in holy affections and spiritual delight in some correspondency with that which is in the saints above,—is the duty, and ought to be the design, of the church of believers here below. So much as we are furthered and assisted herein by our present ordinances, so much benefit and advantage have we by them, and no more. A constant view of this glory will cast contempt on all the desirable things of this world, and deliver our minds from any dreadful apprehensions of what is most terrible therein.

[2.] This heavenly worship in the sanctuary above, administered by the High Priest over the house of God, is *conspicuously glorious.*

The glory of God is the great end of it, as shall be immediately declared; that is, the manifestation of it. The manifestation of the glory of God consists *really* in the effects of his infinite wisdom, goodness, grace, and power;—*declaratively*, in the express acknowledgment of it with praise. Herein, therefore, doth the solemn worship of God in the sanctuary above consist,—setting aside only the immediate actings of Christ in his intercession. It is a glorious, express acknowledgment of the wisdom, love, goodness, grace, and power of God, in the redemption, sanctification, and salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, with a continual ascription of all divine honour unto him in the way of praise. For the manner of its performance, our present light into it is but dark and obscure. Some things have an evidence in them. As,—

1*st*, That there is nothing *carnal* in it, or such things as are suited unto the fancies and imaginations of men. In the thoughts of heaven, most persons are apt to frame images in their minds of such carnal things as they suppose they could be delighted withal. But they are far remote from the worship of this holy assembly. The worship of the Gospel, which is spiritually glorious, makes a nearer approach unto it than that of the Temple, which was outwardly and carnally so.

2*dly*, It is not merely *mental*, or transacted only in the silent thoughts of each individual person; for, as we have showed, it is the worship of a church assembly wherein they have all communion, and join in the performance of it. We know not well the way and manner of communication between angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is expressed in the Scripture by voices, postures, and gestures; which, although they are not of the same nature as absolutely ours are, yet are they really significant of the things they would express, and a means of mutual communication. Yea, I know not how far God may give them the use of voice and words whereby to express his praise, as Moses talked with Christ at his transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 3. But the manner of it is such as whereby the whole assembly above do jointly set forth and celebrate the praises of God. And the glory hereof consisteth in three things.

[1.] The *blessed and beautiful order* of all things in that sanctuary. Job describes the grave beneath to be a "place without any order, and where the light is as darkness," chap. x. 22. All above is order and light,—every person and thing in its proper place and exercise. 1*st*, Heaven itself is a *temple*, a sanctuary, made so by the especial presence of God, and the ministration of Christ in the tabernacle of his human nature. 2*dly*, God is on *the throne of grace*, gloriously exalted on the account of his grace, and for the dispensation of it. To the saints above he is on the throne of grace, in that they are in the full enjoyment of the effects of his grace, and do give glory unto

him on the account thereof. He is so, also, with respect unto the church here below, in the continual communications of grace and mercy through Christ. 3*dly*, The Lord Christ, in his human nature, is *before the throne*, acting his mediatory office and power in behalf of the church. 4*thly*, All the holy angels, in the various orders and degrees of their *ministration*, are about the throne continually. So —5*thly*, Are the *spirits of just men made perfect*, in the various measures of light and glory. And these things were obscurely represented in the order of the church at its first erection in the wilderness; for the ordinances of God among them were patterns or figures of heavenly things, Heb. ix. 23. (1*st*,) In the midst was the *tabernacle* or sanctuary,—which represented the sanctuary or temple above. (2*dly*,) In the most holy place were the *ark* and *mercy-seat*,—representatives of the throne of grace. (3*dly*,) The *ministry of the high priest*,—a type of the ministry of Christ. (4*thly*,) The *Levites*, who attended on the priest, did represent the ministry of angels attending on Christ in the discharge of his office. And, (5*thly*,) Round about them were the *tribes* in their order.

[2.] In the *full, clear apprehensions* which all the blessed ones have of the glory of God in Christ, of the work and effects of his wisdom and grace towards mankind. These are the foundation of all divine worship. And because our conceptions and apprehensions about them are dark, low, obscure, and inevident, our worship is weak and imperfect also. But all is open unto the saints above. We are in the dust, the blood, the noise of the battle; they are victoriously at peace, and have a perfect view of what they have passed through, and what they have attained unto. They are come to the springs of life and light, and are filled with admiration of the grace of God in themselves and one another. What they see in God and in Jesus Christ, what they have experience of in themselves, what they know and learn from others, are all of them inconceivable and inexpressible. It is well for us, if we have so much experience of these things as to see a real glory in the fulness and perfection of them. The apprehensions by sight, without mixture of unsteadiness or darkness, without the alloy of fears or temptations, with an ineffable sense of the things themselves on their hearts or minds, are the springs or motives of the holy worship which is in heaven.

[3.] In the glorious *manner* of the performance of it. Now, whereas it ariseth from sight and present enjoyment, it must consist in a continual ascription of glory and praise unto God; and so it is described in the Scripture. See Rev. iv. 9–11, with Isa. vi. 3. And how little a portion of the glory of these things is it that we can apprehend!

3. In this solemn assembly before the throne of grace, the Lord

Jesus Christ—the great High Priest—doth represent and render acceptable unto God *the worship of the church here below.* So it is expressed, Rev. viii. 3, 4, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." It is a representation of the high priest burning incense on the golden altar on the day of atonement, when he entered into the most holy place; for that altar was placed just at the entrance of it, directly before the ark and mercy-seat, representing the throne of God. This angel, therefore, is our High Priest; none else could approach that altar, or offer incense on it, the smoke whereof was to enter into the holy place. And the "prayers of all saints" is a synecdochical expression of the whole worship of the church. And this is presented before the throne of God by this High Priest. And it is not said that their *prayers* came unto the throne of God, but the *smoke of the incense* out of the hand of the angel did so; for it is the incense of the intercession of Christ alone that gives them their acceptance with God. Without this, none of our prayers, praises, or thanksgivings, would ever have access into the presence of God, or unto the throne of grace. Blessed be God for this relief, under the consideration of the weakness and imperfection of them! Wherefore, in him and by him alone do we represent all our desires, and prayers, and whole worship to God. And herein, in all our worship, do we ourselves "enter into the most holy place," Heb. x. 19. We do it not merely by faith, but by this especial exercise of it, in putting our prayers into the hand of this High Priest.

There are three things in all our worship that would hinder its access unto God, and acceptance with him, as also keep off comfort and peace from our consciences. The first is, *The sin* or iniquity that cleaves unto it; secondly, *The weakness* or imperfection that at best is in it; and, thirdly, *The unworthiness* of the persons by whom it is performed. With reference unto these things the *Law* could never consummate or perfect the consciences of them that came unto God by the sacrifices of it. But there are three things in the sacerdotal ministration of Christ that remove and take them all away, whereon we have access with boldness unto God. And they are—(1.) The *influence* of his oblation; (2.) The *efficacy* of his intercession; and, (3.) The *dignity* of his person. Through the first of these he bears and takes away all the iniquity of our holy things, as Aaron did typically of old, by virtue of the plate of gold with the name of God (a figure of Christ) on his forehead, Exod. xxviii. 36–38. He hath made atonement for them in the blood of his oblation, and they appear not in

the presence of God. Through the second, or the efficacy of his intercession, he gives acceptance unto our prayers and holy worship, with power and prevalency before God. For this is that *incense* whose smoke or sweet perfume comes up with the prayers of all saints unto the throne of God. Through the third, or the dignity of his person, wherein he appears as the representative of his whole mystical body, he takes away from our consciences that sense of our own vileness and unworthiness which would not suffer us to approach with boldness unto the throne of grace. In these things consists the life of the worship of the church,—of all believers; without which, as it would not be acceptable unto God, so we could have neither peace nor consolation in it ourselves.

4. Herein hath the church that is *triumphant* communion with that which is yet *militant*. The assembly above have not lost their concernment in the church here below. As we rejoice in their glory, safety, and happiness, that having passed through the storms and tempests, the temptations, sufferings, and dangers, of this life and world, they are harboured in eternal glory, unto the praise of God in Christ; so are they full of affections towards their brethren exercised with the same temptations, difficulties, and dangers, which they have passed through, with earnest desires for their deliverance and safety. Wherefore, when they behold the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great high priest over the house of God, presenting their prayers, with all their holy worship unto him, rendering them acceptable by the incense of his own intercession, it fills them with satisfaction, and continually excites them unto the assignation of praise, and glory, and honour unto him. This is the state of the saints above, with respect unto the church here below. This is all which may be herein ascribed unto them; and this may safely be so. What some have fancied about their own personal intercession, and that for particular persons, is derogatory unto the honour of Jesus Christ, and inconsistent with their present condition; but in these things consists their communion with the church here below. A *love* they have unto it, from their union with it in the same mystical body, Eph. i. 10. A *sense* they have of its condition, from the experience they had of it in the days of their flesh. A great *concernment* they have for the glory of God in them, and a fervent desire of their eternal salvation. They know that without them they shall not be absolutely consummate, or made perfect in their whole persons, Rev. vi. 11. In this state of things they continually behold the Lord Jesus Christ presenting their prayers before the throne of grace,—making intercession for them,—appearing to plead their cause against all their adversaries,—transacting all their affairs in the presence of God,—taking care of their salvation, that not one of them shall perish. This continually fills them with a holy

satisfaction and complacency, and is a great part of the subject-matter of their incessant praises and ascriptions of glory unto him. Herein lies the concernment of the church above in that here below; this is the communion that is between them, whereof the person of Christ, in the discharge of his office, is the bond and centre.

5. There is herein a *full manifestation* made of the wisdom of God, in all the holy institutions of the tabernacle and temple of old. Herein the veil is fully taken off from them, and that obscure representation of heavenly things is brought forth unto light and glory. It is true, this is done unto a great degree in the dispensation of the Gospel. By the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the discharge of his mediatory office in this world, the substance of what they did prefigure is accomplished; and in the revelations of the Gospel the nature and end of them is declared. Howbeit, they extended their signification also unto things within the veil, or the discharge of the priestly office of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, Heb. ix. 24. Wherefore, as we have not yet a perfection of light to understand the depth of the mysteries contained in them; so themselves also were not absolutely fulfilled until the Lord Christ discharged his office in the holy place. This is the glory of the pattern which God showed unto Moses in the mount, made conspicuous and evident unto all. Therein especially do the saints of the Old Testament, who were exercised all their days in those typical institutions whose end and design they could not comprehend, see the manifold wisdom and goodness of God in them all, rejoicing in them for evermore.

6. All that the Lord Christ receives of the Father on the account of this holy interposition and mediation for the church, he is endowed with *sovereign authority* and *almighty power* in himself to execute and accomplish. Therefore is he said, as a priest, to be "made higher than the heavens;" and as a "priest to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," Heb. viii. 1. This glorious power doth not immediately belong unto him on the account of his sacerdotal office, but it is that qualification of his person which is necessary unto the effectual discharge of it. Hence it is said of him, that he should "bear the glory," and "sit and rule upon his throne," and should be "a priest upon his throne," Zech. vi. 13. A throne is *insigne regium*, and properly belongs unto Christ with respect unto his kingly office, Heb. i. 8, 9. Howbeit the power accompanying and belonging unto his throne being necessary unto the effectual discharge of his priestly office, as he sits and rules on his throne, so it is said that he is a "priest on his throne" also.

This is one instance of the present state of Christ in heaven, and of the work which he doth there perform, and the only instance I shall insist upon. He was made a priest "after the power of an end-

less life,"—the life which he now leads in heaven;—and "lives for ever to make intercession for us." He was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death,—all power over the enemies of his church. God on a throne of grace;—Christ, the high priest, so on his right hand in glory and power as yet to be "before the throne" in the virtue of his sacerdotal office, with the whole concernment of the church on his hand, transacting all things with God for them;—all the holy angels and the "spirits of just men made perfect" encompassing the throne with continual praises unto God, even the Father, and him, on the account of the work of infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, in his incarnation, mediation, and salvation of the church thereby;—himself continuing to manage the cause of the whole church before God, presenting all their prayers and services unto him perfumed with his own intercession,—is that resemblance of heaven and its present glory which the Scripture offers unto us. But, alas! how weak, how dark, how low, are our conceptions and apprehensions of these heavenly things! We see yet as through a glass darkly, and know but in part. The time is approaching when we shall see these things "with open face," and know even as we are known. The best improvement we can make of this prospect, whilst faith supplies the place of future sight, is to be stirred up thereby unto holy longings after a participation in this glory, and constant diligence in that holy obedience whereby we may arrive thereunto.

What remaineth yet to be spoken on this subject hath respect unto these two ensuing propositions:—

1. All the effects of the offices of Christ, *internal, spiritual, and eternal*, in grace and glory,—all external fruits of their dispensation in providence towards the church or its enemies,—are wrought by divine power; or are the effects of an emanation of power from God. They are all wrought "by the exceeding greatness of his power," even as he wrought in Christ himself when he raised him from the dead, Eph. i. 19. For all the outward works of God, such as all these are, which are wrought in and for the church, are necessarily immediate effects of divine power,—nor can be of another nature.

2. Upon supposition of the *obedience* of Christ in this life, and the *atonement* made by his blood for sin, with his exaltation thereon, there is nothing in any essential property of the nature of God,—nothing in the eternal, unchangeable law of obedience,—to hinder but that God might work all these things in us unto his own honour and glory, in the eternal salvation of the church and the destruction of all its enemies, *without a continuance of the administration of the offices of Christ in heaven*, and all that sacred solemnity of worship wherewith it is accompanied.

These things being certain and evident, we may inquire thereon,

whence it is that God hath ordered *the continuation of all these things* in heaven above, seeing these ends might have been accomplished without them, by immediate acts of divine power.

The great "works of the LORD are sought out of them that have pleasure in them," Ps. cxi. 2. This, therefore, being a great work of God, which he hath wrought and revealed unto us, especially in the effects and fruits of it, and that for the manifestation of his wisdom and grace, it is our duty to inquire into it with all humble diligence; "for those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children," that we may do the will of God for our good. Wherefore,—

(1.) God would have it so, *for the manifestation of his own glory.* This is the first great end of all the works of God. That it is so is a fundamental principle of our religion. And how his works do glorify him is our duty to inquire. The essential glory of God is always the same,—eternal and immutable. It is the being of God, with that respect which all creatures have unto it. For glory adds a supposition of relation unto being. But the manifestations of his glory are various, according to the pleasure of his will. Wherefore, that which he chooseth to manifest his glory in and by at one time, he may cease from using it unto that end at another; for its being a means of the manifestation of his glory may depend on such circumstances, such a state of things, which being removed, it ceaseth to be. So of old he manifested and represented his glory in the tabernacle and temple, and the holy pledges of his presence in them, and was glorified in all the worship of the Law. But now he ceaseth so to do, nor is any more honoured by the services and ceremonies of religion therein prescribed. If the whole structure of the temple and all its beautiful services were now in being on the earth, no glory would redound unto God thereby,—he would receive none from it. To expect the glory of God in them would be a high dishonour unto him. And God may at any time begin to manifest his glory by such ways and means as he did not formerly make use of unto that purpose. So is it with all Gospel ordinances: which state will be continued unto the consummation of all things here below, and no longer; for then shall they all cease, —God will be no more glorified in them or by them. So hath God chosen to glorify himself in heaven by this administration of all things in and by Jesus Christ; whereunto also there is an end determined.

And in the continuance of this holy worship in the sanctuary above, God doth manifest his glory on many accounts, and resteth therein. First, he doth it in and *unto the saints who departed this life under the Old Testament.* They came short in glory of what they now enter into who die in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For—not to dispute about nor determine positively, what was their state and condition before the ascension of Christ into heaven, or what was the

nature of the blessed receptacle of their souls—it is manifest that they did not, they could not, behold the glory of God, and the accomplishment of the mystery of his wisdom and will, in Jesus Christ; nor was it perfectly made known unto them. Whatever were their rest, refreshment, and blessedness,—whatever were their enjoyments of the presence of God; yet was there no throne of grace erected in heaven,—no High Priest appearing before it,—no Lamb as it had been slain,—no joint ascription of glory unto him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever; God "having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." See Eph. iii. 9, 10.

This was that, and this was that alone, so far as in the Scripture it is revealed, wherein they came short of that glory which is now enjoyed in heaven. And herein consists the advantage of the *saints* above them, *who now die in faith.* Their state in heaven was suited unto their faith and worship on the earth. They had no clear, distinct knowledge of the incarnation and mediatory office of Christ by their revelations and services; only they believed that the promise of deliverance, of grace and mercy, should be in and by him accomplished. Their reception into heaven—that which they were made meet and prepared for by their faith and worship—was suited thereunto. They had a blessed rest and happiness, above what we can comprehend; for who knows what it is to be in the glorious presence of God, though at the greatest distance? They were not immediately surprised with an appearance of that glory which they had no distinct apprehensions of in this world. Neither they nor the angels knew clearly either the sufferings of Christ or the glory that should ensue. But they saw and knew that there was yet something farther to be done in heaven and earth, as yet hid in God and the counsels of his will, for the exaltation of his glory in the complete salvation of the church. This they continued waiting for in the holy place of their refreshment above. Faith gave them, and it gives us, an entrance into the presence of God, and makes us meet for it. But what they immediately enjoyed did not in its whole kind exceed what their faith directed unto. No more doth ours. Wherefore they were not prepared for a view of the present glory of heaven; nor did enjoy it. But the saints under the New Testament, who are clearly instructed by the Gospel in the mysteries of the incarnation and mediation of Christ, are, by their faith and worship, made meet for an immediate entrance into this glory. This they long for, this they expect and are secured of, from the prayer of our Saviour;—that they be, when they leave this world, where he is, to behold his glory.

But now, upon the *entrance of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary,* all those holy ones were admitted into the same glory with what the saints under the New Testament do enjoy. Hereon with open face

they behold the use and end of those typical services and ordinances wherein these things were shadowed out unto them. No heart can conceive that ineffable addition of glory which they received hereby. The mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in their redemption and salvation by Christ was now fully represented unto them; what they had prayed for, longed for, and desired to see in the days of their flesh on the earth, and waited for so long in heaven, was now gloriously made manifest unto them. Hereon did glorious light and blessed satisfaction come into and upon all those blessed souls, who died in the faith, but had not received the promise,—only beheld it afar off. And hereby did God greatly manifest his own glory in them and unto them; which is the first end of the continuation of this state of things in heaven. This makes me judge that the season of Christ's entrance into heaven, as the holy sanctuary of God, was the greatest instance of created glory that ever was or ever shall be, unto the consummation of all things. And this, as for other reasons, so because all the holy souls who had departed in the faith from the foundation of the world, were then received into the glorious light of the counsels of God, and knowledge of the effects of his grace by Jesus Christ.

Want of a due apprehension of the truth herein hath caused many, especially those of the Church of Rome, to follow after vain imaginations about the state of the souls of the faithful, departed under the Old Testament. Generally, they shut them up in a subterranean *limbus*, whence they were delivered by the descent of Christ. But it is contrary unto all notions and revelations of the respect of God unto his people—contrary to the life and nature of faith—that those who have passed through their course of obedience in this world, and finished the work given unto them, should not enter, upon their departure, into blessed rest in the presence of God. Take away the persuasion hereof, and the whole nature of faith is destroyed. But into the fulness of present glory they could not be admitted; as hath been declared.

Moreover, God hereby manifests his glory unto the *holy angels themselves*. Those things wherein it doth consist were hid in himself even from them, from the foundation of the world,—hidden in the holy counsels of his will, Eph. iii. 9. Wherefore unto these "principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God was made known by the church," verse 10. The church being redeemed by the blood of Christ, and himself thereon exalted in this glory, they came to know the "manifold wisdom of God" by the effects of it; which before they earnestly desired to look into, 1 Peter i. 12. Hereby is all the glory of the counsels of God in Christ made conspicuous unto them; and they receive themselves no small advancement in glory thereby. For in the present comprehension of the mind of God, and doing of his will, doth their blessedness consist.

Heaven itself was not what it is, before the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary for the administration of his office. Neither the saints departed nor the angels themselves were participant of that glory which now they are. Neither yet doth this argue any defect in heaven, or the state thereof in its primitive constitution; for the perfection of any state hath respect unto that order of things which it is originally suited unto. Take all things in the order of the first creation, and with respect thereunto heaven was perfect in glory from the beginning. Howbeit there was still a relation and regard in it unto the church of mankind on the earth, which was to be translated thither. But by the entrance of sin all this order was disturbed, and all this relation was broken. And there followed thereon an imperfection in the state of heaven itself; for it had no longer a relation unto, or communion with, them on earth, nor was a receptacle meet for men who were sinners to be received into. Wherefore, by the "blood of the cross," God "reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 20,—or gathered all things into one in him, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Eph. i. 10. Even the things in heaven so far stood in need of a reconciliation, as that they might be gathered together in one with the things on earth; the glory whereof is manifested in this heavenly ministration. And the apostle affirms that the "heavenly things themselves" were purified by the sacrifice of Christ, Heb. ix. 23. Not that they were *actually defiled* in themselves, but without this purification they were not meet for the fellowship of this mystery in the joint worship of the whole society in heaven and earth, by Jesus Christ. Hence, therefore, there is a continual manifestation of the glory of God unto the angels themselves. They behold his manifold wisdom and grace in the blessed effects of it, which were treasured up in the holy counsels of his will from eternity. Hereby is their own light and blessedness advanced, and they are filled with admirations of God, ascribing praise, honour, and glory unto him for evermore; for the beholding of the mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ, which is here so despised in the dispensation of the Gospel, is the principal part of the blessedness of the angels in heaven, which fills them with eternal delight, and is the ground of their ascribing praise and glory unto him for evermore.

This is that *manifestative glory* wherewith God satisfieth himself, until the end determined shall be. On the account hereof he doth and will bear with things in this world, unto the appointed season. For whilst the creation is in its present posture, a *revenue of glory* must be taken out of it for God; and longer than that is done it cannot be continued. But the world is so full of darkness and confusion, of sin and wickedness, of enmity against God,—is so given up to villany,

unto all the ways whereby God may be dishonoured,—that there is little or no appearance of any revenue of glory unto him from it. Were it not on the secret account of divine wisdom, it would quickly receive the end of Sodom and Gomorrah. The small remnant of the inheritance of Christ is shut up in such obscurity, that, as unto visible appearance and manifestation, it is no way to be laid in the balance against the dishonour that is done unto him by the whole world. But whilst things are in this posture here below, God hath a solemn honour, glory, and worship above, in the presence of all his holy ones; wherein he resteth and takes pleasure. In his satisfaction herein he will continue things in this world unto all the ends of his wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and patience, let it rage in villany and wickedness as it pleaseth. And so, when any of the saints who are wearied, and even worn out, with the state of things in this world, and, it may be, understand not the grounds of the patience of God, do enter into this state, they shall, unto their full satisfaction, behold that glory which abundantly compensates the present dishonour done to God here below.

(2.) This state of things is continued for the glory of Christ himself. The office of Mediator was committed by God the Father unto his only-begotten Son,—no other being able to bear or discharge it. See Isa. ix. 6; Rev. v. 1–5. But in the discharge of this office it was necessary he should condescend unto a mean and low condition, and to undergo things difficult, hard, and terrible, Phil. ii. 6–8. Such were the things which our Lord Jesus Christ underwent in this world;—his undergoing of them being necessary unto the discharge of his office; yea, it consisted therein. Herein was he exposed unto reproach, contempt, and shame, with all the evils that Satan or the world could bring upon him. And besides, he was, for us and in our stead, to undergo the "curse of the law," with the greatest of terrors and sorrows in his soul, until he gave up the ghost. These things were necessary unto the discharge of his office, nor could the salvation of the church be wrought out without them. But do we think that God would commit so glorious an office unto his only Son to be discharged in this manner only? Let it be granted that after he had so accomplished the will of God in this world, he had himself entered into glory; yet if he should so cease the administration of his office, that must be looked on as the most afflictive and dolorous that ever was undergone. But it was the design of God to glorify the *office itself*, as an effect of his wisdom, and himself therein; yea, so as that the very office itself should be an everlasting honour to his Son as incarnate. Unto this end the administration of it is continued in glory in his hand, and he is exalted in the discharge of it. For this is that glory which he prays that all his disciples may be brought

unto him to behold. The time between his ascension and the end of all things is allotted unto the glory of Christ in the administration of his office in the heavenly sanctuary. And from hence doth the apostle prove him, "as a high priest," to be far more glorious than those who were called unto that office under the law, Heb. viii. 1–3. Herein it is manifest unto angels and men, how glorious a thing it is to be the only king, priest, and prophet of the church. Wherefore, as it behoved Christ, in the discharge of his office, to suffer; so, after his sufferings in the discharge of the same office, he was to enter into his glory, Rev. i. 18.

(3.) God hath respect herein unto those who *depart in the faith*, in their respective generations, especially those who died betimes, as the apostles and primitive Christians. And sundry things may be herein considered.

[1.] There are two things which believers put a great price and value on in this world, and which sweeten every condition unto them. Without them the world would be a noisome dungeon unto them, nor could they be satisfied with a continuance therein. The one is *the service of Christ.* Without an opportunity of being exercised herein, they could not abide here with any satisfaction. They who know it not so to be, are under the power of worldly-mindedness. The meanest service of Christ hath refreshment in it. And as to those who have opportunities and abilities for great instances of service, they do not know on just grounds, nor are able to determine themselves, whether it be best for them to continue in their service here below, or to enter into the immediate service of Christ above;—so glorious, so excellent is it to be usefully serviceable unto the Lord Jesus. So was it with the apostle, Phil. i. 21–26;—so may it be with others, if they serve him in the same spirit, with the same sincerity, though their ability in service be not like unto his. For neither had he anything but what he received. Again, they have the enjoyment of Christ in the ordinances of Gospel worship. By these means do they live,—in these things is the life of their souls.

In this state of things God will not call them hence unto their loss; he will not put an end unto these privileges, without an abundant recompense and advantage. Whatever we enjoy here, yet still to depart hence and to be with Christ shall be far better, Phil. i. 23. For,—

1*st*, Although *service* here below shall cease, and be given over unto other hands who are to have their share herein; yet, on the continuance of this state of things in heaven, there is also a continuation of service unto Christ, in a way inexpressibly more glorious than what we are in this life capable of. Upon their admittance into this state of things above, they are before the throne of God, and serve him day

and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, Rev. vii. 15. The whole state of the glorious worship of God before described is here respected; and herein is a continual service performed unto him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Wherefore it is so far from being loss, in being called off from service here below, as that, in point of service itself, it is an inconceivable advancement.

2*dly*, The enjoyment of Christ in and by the ordinances of his worship, is the immediate fountain and spring of all our refreshments and consolations in this world, Ps. lxxxvii. 7; but what is it unto the blessed immediate enjoyment of him in heaven! Hence the blessedness of the state above is described, by *being with Christ, being with Christ for ever*,—in the presence and immediate enjoyment of him. The light of the stars is useful and relieving in a dark night as we are on our way; but what are they when the sun ariseth! Will any man think it a loss, that, upon the rising of the sun, they shall not enjoy their light any more, though in the night they knew not what to have done without it? It may be we cannot conceive how it will be best for us to forego the use of sacraments, ministry, and the Scripture itself. But all the virtue of the streams is in the fountain; and the immediate enjoyment of Christ unspeakably exceeds whatever by any means we can be made partakers of here below.

In this blessed state have the holy apostles, all the primitive martyrs and believers, from the time of their dissolution, enjoyed full satisfaction and solace, in the glorious assembly above, Rev. vii. 15–17, &c.

[2.] Hereby there is a continuation of *communion* between the church *triumphant* above and that yet *militant* here below. That there is such a communion between glorified saints and believers in this world, is an article of faith. Both societies are but one church, one mystical body, have one Head, and a mutual concernment in each other. Yea, the spring and means of this communion is no small part of the glory of the Gospel. For,—before the saints under the Old Testament had the mystery of the glory of God in Christ, with our redemption thereby, revealed unto them, in the way before declared,—this communion was very obscure; but we are now taken into the light and glory of it, as the apostle declares, Heb. xii. 22–24.

I know some have perverted the notions of this communion unto idolatrous superstition; and so have all other truths of the Gospel been abused and wrested, unto the destruction of the souls of men;—all the Scriptures have been so dealt withal, 2 Pet. iii. 16. But they deceived themselves in this matter,—the truth deceiveth none. Upon a supposition of communion, they gathered that there must of necessity be an immediate communication between them above and us below. And if so, they knew no way for it, no means of it, but by

our *praying unto them*, and their *praying* for us. But they were under the power of their own deceivings. Communion doth not require immediate mutual communication, unless it be among persons in the same state, and that in such acts as wherein they are mutually assisting and helpful unto one another. But our different states will admit of no such intercourse; nor do we stand in need of any relief from them, or can be helped by any acts of their love, as we may aid and help one another here below. Wherefore the *centre* of this communion is in Christ alone, and our exercise of it is upon him only, with respect unto them.

Yet hereon some deny that there is any such communion between the members of the church or the mystical body of Christ in these diverse states. And they suppose it is so declared in that of the prophet, Isa. lxiii. 16, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not." But there is nothing of any such importance in these words. The church, under a deep sense of its present state, in its unworthy walking and multiplied provocations, profess themselves to be such, as that their forefathers in covenant could not own them as their children and posterity in the faith. Hereupon they appeal unto the infinite mercy and faithfulness of God, which extend themselves even unto that condition of unworthiness which was enough to render them utterly disowned by the best of men, however otherwise concerned in them. But to suppose the church above, which hath passed through its course of faith and obedience in afflictions, tribulations, and persecutions, to be ignorant of the state of the church here below in general, and unconcerned in it,—to be without desires of its success, deliverance, and prosperity, unto the glory of Christ,—is to lay them asleep in a senseless state, without the exercise of any grace, or any interest in the glory of God. And if they cry for vengeance on the obdurate persecuting world, Rev. vi. 10, shall we suppose they have no consideration nor knowledge of the state of the church suffering the same things which they did themselves? And, to put it out of question, they are minded of it in the next verse by Christ himself, verse 11.

But that which at present I alone intend, is the joint communion of the whole church in the worship of God in Christ. Were all that die in the Lord immediately received into that state wherein God "shall be all in all,"—without any use of the mediation of Christ, or the worship of praise and honour given unto God by him,—without being exercised in the ascription of honour, glory, power, and dominion unto him, on the account of the past and present discharge of his office,—there could be no communion between them and us. But whilst they are in the sanctuary, in the temple of God, in the holy worship of Christ and of God in him, and we are not only employed

in the same work, in sacred ordinances suited unto our state and condition, but, in the performance of our duties, do by faith "enter in within the veil," and approach unto the same throne of grace in the most holy place, there is a spiritual communion between them and us. So the apostle expresseth it, Heb. xii. 22–24.

[3.] It is the way that God hath appointed *to prepare the holy souls above for the enjoyment of that eternal state which shall ensue* at the end of all things. As we are here, in and by the Word and other ordinances, prepared and made meet for the present state of things in glory; so are they, by the temple-worship of heaven, fitted for that state of things when Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father, that God may be all in all.

(4.) Respect is had herein unto *the faith of the church yet militant* on the earth, and that, among others, in two things.

1*st*, For the *encouragement of their faith.* God could, as we have observed, upon the supposition of the atonement and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, have saved the church by mere sovereign acts of power. But whereas it was unto his glory that we should be saved in the way of *faith and obedience*, this way was necessary unto our encouragement therein. For it is in the nature of faith, it is a grace suited unto that end, to seek for and receive aid, help, and relief, from God continually, to enable us unto obedience.

For this end the Lord Christ continueth in the discharge of his office, whereby he is able to save us unto the uttermost, that we may receive such supplies by and from him. The continual use that faith makes of Christ unto this purpose, as he gloriously exerciseth his mediatory office and power in heaven, cannot fully be declared. Neither can any believer, who is acted by present Gospel light and grace, conceive how the life of faith can be led or preserved without it. No duties are we called unto,—no temptations are we exercised withal,—no sufferings do we undergo,—no difficulties, dangers, fears, have we to conflict withal,—nothing is there in life or death, wherein the glory of God or our own spiritual welfare is concerned,—but faith finds and takes relief and encouragement in the present mediatory life and power of Christ in heaven, with the exercise of his love, care, and compassion therein. So he proposeth himself unto our faith, Rev. i. 17, 18.

2*dly*, That our faith may be *guided and directed in all our accesses unto God* in his holy worship. Were nothing proposed unto us but the *immensity of the divine essence*, we should not know how to make our approaches unto it. And thence it is that those who are unacquainted with the glory of this dispensation, who know not how to make *use of Christ* in his present state for an access unto God, are always inventing ways of their own (as by saints, angels, images) for

that end; for an immediate access unto the divine essence they cannot fancy. Wherefore, to end this discourse in one word,—all the present faith and worship of God in the church here on earth, all access unto him for grace, and all acceptable ascriptions of glory unto his divine Majesty, do all of them, in their being and exercise, wholly depend on, and are resolved into, the continuation of the mediatory actings of Christ in heaven and glory.

I shall close this discourse with a little review of somewhat that passed before. From the consideration of that place of the apostle wherein he affirms, *that at the end Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father*, I declared that all the state of things which we have described shall then cease, and all things issue in the immediate enjoyment of God himself. I would extend this no farther than as unto what concerneth the exercise of Christ's mediatory office with respect unto the church here below, and the enemies of it. But there are some things which belong unto the essence of this state which shall continue unto all eternity; as,—

1*st*, I do believe that the person of Christ, in and by his human nature, shall be for ever the *immediate head of the whole glorified creation*. God having gathered all things unto a head in him, the knot or centre of that collection shall never be dissolved. We shall never lose our relation unto him, nor he his unto us.

2*dly*, I do therefore also believe, that he shall be *the means and way of communication* between God and his glorified saints for ever. What are, what will be, the glorious communications of God unto his saints for ever, in life, light, power, joy, rest, and ineffable satisfaction, (as all must be from him unto eternity,) I shall not now inquire. But this I say, they shall be all made in and through the person of the Son, and the human nature therein. That *tabernacle* shall never be folded up, never be laid aside as useless. And if it be said, that I cannot declare the way and manner of the eternal communications of God himself unto his saints in glory by Christ; I shall only say, that I cannot declare the way and manner of his communications of himself in grace by Christ unto the souls of men in this world, and yet I do believe it. How much more must we satisfy ourselves with the evidence of faith alone in those things which, as yet, are more incomprehensible! And our adherence unto God, by love and delight, shall always be through Christ. For God will be conceived of unto eternity according to the manifestation that he hath made of himself in him, and no otherwise. This shall not be by acting faith with respect unto the actual exercise of the mediation of Christ, as now we cleave unto God; but it shall be by the all-satisfying acting of love unto God, as he hath manifested himself, and will manifest himself in Christ.

3*dly*, The person of Christ, and therein his human nature, shall be *the eternal object of divine glory*, praise, and worship. The life of glory is not a mere state of contemplation. Vision is the principle of it, as faith is of the life of grace. Love is the great vital acting of that principle, in adherence unto God with eternal delight. But this is active in it also. It shall be exercised in the continual ascription and assignation of glory, praise, and honour unto God, and the glorious exercise of all sorts of grace therein;—hereof the Lamb, the person of Christ, is the eternal object with that of the Father and the Spirit; the *human nature* in the Son, admitted into the communion of the same eternal glory.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

ON

THE GLORY OF CHRIST,

IN HIS

PERSON, OFFICE, AND GRACE:

WITH

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FAITH AND SIGHT; APPLIED UNTO THE USE OF THEM THAT BELIEVE.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The following treatise may be regarded as a series of Discourses on John xvii. 24. The subject is the Glory of Christ, as the representative of God to the church, —in the mystery of his Person,—in his office as Mediator,—in his exaltation on high,—in his relation to the church during every age of its history,—and in the final consummation of his work, when all things are to be gathered into a blessed unity, as the result of his mediation. The treatise is concluded by a statement of the difference between our views of the Glory of Christ as beheld by faith in this world, and as it shall be beheld by sight in heaven.

It is not professedly a sequel to the work of the author on the Person of Christ; though, from some expressions in the Preface to these Meditations, they may be regarded in this light. Several of them are evidently an expansion of certain thoughts and views, of which the germ will be found in the preceding work. The two works are, indeed, so closely connected, that they have been often published together. It has been thought proper, therefore, to adhere to this arrangement in the present republication of Dr Owen's Works.

There are some facts which impart peculiar interest to these Meditations. They were drawn up, according to the author's own statement, "for the exercise of his own mind," in the first instance; and illustrate, accordingly, the scope and tenor of his Christian experience. They form, moreover, his dying testimony to the truth,—and to the truth, with peculiar emphasis, as it "is in Jesus;" for they are the substance of the *last* instructions which he delivered to his flock; and they constitute the *last* work which he prepared for the press. It is instructive to peruse the solemn musings of his soul when "weakness, weariness, and the near approaches of death," were calling him away from his earthly labours; and to mark how intently his thoughts were fixed on the glory of the Saviour, whom he was soon to behold "face to face." On the day of his death, Mr Payne, who had the charge of the original publication of this treatise, on bidding Dr Owen farewell, said to him, "Doctor, I have just been putting your book on the Glory of Christ to the press." "I am glad," was Owen's reply, "to hear that that performance is put to the press; but, O brother Payne, the long looked-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done yet, or was capable of doing in this world!"

Mr Hervey thus expresses his admiration of this work: "To see the *Glory of Christ* is the grand blessing which our Lord solicits and demands for his disciples in his last solemn intercession, John xvii. 24. Should the reader desire assistance in this important work, I would refer him to a little treatise of Dr Owen's, entitled 'Meditations on the Glory of Christ;' it is little in size,—not so in value. Were I to speak of it in the classical style, I should call it *aureus, gemmeus, mellitus.* But I would rather say, it is richly replenished with that unction from the Holy One which tends to enlighten the eyes and cheer the heart; which sweetens the enjoyments of life, softens the hours of death, and prepares for the fruitions of eternity."—*Theron and Aspasio*, vol. iii. p. 75.

The treatise was published in 1684. It was reprinted in 1696, with the addition of two chapters which were found among the papers of Owen, and in his own handwriting, though too late for insertion in the first edition of the work.—Ed.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

The design of the ensuing Discourse is to declare some part of that glory of our Lord Jesus Christ which is revealed in the Scripture, and proposed as the principal object of our faith, love, delight, and admiration. But, alas! after our utmost and most diligent inquiries, we must say, How little a portion is it of him that we can understand! His glory is incomprehensible, and his praises are unutterable. Some things an illuminated mind may conceive of it; but what we can express in comparison of what it is in itself, is even less than nothing. But as for those who have forsaken the only true guide herein, endeavouring to be wise above what is written, and to raise their contemplations by fancy and imagination above Scripture revelation (as many have done), they have darkened counsel without knowledge, uttering things which they understand not, which have no substance or spiritual food of faith in them.

Howbeit, that real view which we may have of Christ and his glory in this world by faith,—however weak and obscure that knowledge which we may attain of them by divine revelation,—is inexpressibly to be preferred above all other wisdom, understanding, or knowledge whatever. So it is declared by him who will be acknowledged a competent judge in these things. "Yea, doubtless," saith he, "I count all these things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He who doth not so hath no part in him.

The revelation made of Christ in the blessed Gospel is far more excellent, more glorious, and more filled with rays of divine wisdom and goodness, than the whole creation and the just comprehension of it, if attainable, can contain or afford. Without the knowledge hereof, the mind of man, however priding itself in other inventions and discoveries, is wrapped up in darkness and confusion.

This, therefore, deserves the severest of our thoughts, the best of our meditations, and our utmost diligence in them. For if our future blessedness shall consist in being where he is, and beholding of his glory, what better preparation can there be for it than in a constant previous contemplation of that glory in the revelation that is made in the Gospel, unto this very end, that by a view of it we may be gradually transformed into the same glory?

I shall not, therefore, use any apology for the publishing of the ensuing Meditations, intended first for the exercise of my own mind, and then for the edification of a private congregation; which is like to be the last service I shall do them in that kind. Some may, by the consideration of them, be called to attend unto the same duty with more diligence than formerly, and receive directions for the discharge of it; and some may be provoked to communicate their greater light and knowledge unto the good of many. And that which I design farther in the present Discourse, is to give a brief account of the necessity and use, in life and death, of the duty exhorted unto.

Particular motives unto the diligent discharge of this duty will be pressed in the Discourse itself. Here some things more general only shall be premised. For all persons not immersed in sensual pleasures,—not overdrenched in the love of this

world and present things,—who have any generous or noble thoughts about their own nature, being, and end,—are under the highest obligation to betake themselves unto this contemplation of Christ and his glory. Without this, they shall never attain true rest or satisfaction in their own minds. He it is alone in whom the race of mankind may boast and glory, on whom all its felicities do depend. For,—

I. He it is in whom *our nature*, which was debased as low as hell by apostasy from God, *is exalted* above the whole creation. Our nature, in the original constitution of it, in the persons of our first parents, was crowned with honour and dignity. The image of God wherein it was made, and the dominion over the lower world wherewith it was intrusted, made it the seat of excellency, of beauty, and of glory. But of them all it was at once divested and made naked by sin, and laid grovelling in the dust from whence it was taken. "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return," was its righteous doom. And all its internal faculties were invaded by deformed lusts,—everything that might render the whole unlike unto God, whose image it had lost. Hence it became the contempt of angels, the dominion of Satan; who, being the enemy of the whole creation, never had any thing or place to reign in but the debased nature of man. Nothing was now more vile and base; its glory was utterly departed. It had both lost its peculiar nearness unto God, which was its honour, and was fallen into the greatest distance from him of all creatures, the devils only excepted; which was its ignominy and shame. And in this state, as unto anything in itself, it was left to perish eternally.

In this condition—lost, poor, base, yea, cursed—the Lord Christ, the Son of God, found our nature. And hereon, in infinite condescension and compassion, sanctifying a portion of it unto himself, he took it to be his own, in a holy, ineffable subsistence, in his own person. And herein again the same nature, so depressed into the utmost misery, is exalted above the whole creation of God. For in that very nature, God hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." This is that which is so celebrated by the Psalmist, with the highest admiration, Ps. viii. 3–8. This is the greatest privilege we have among all our fellow-creatures,—this we may glory in, and value ourselves upon. Those who engage this nature in the service of sensual lusts and pleasures,—who think that its felicity and utmost capacities consist in their satisfaction, with the accomplishment of other earthly, temporary desires, —are satisfied with it in its state of apostasy from God; but those who have received the light of faith and grace, so as rightly to understand the being and end of that nature whereof they are partakers, cannot but rejoice in its deliverance from the utmost debasement, into that glorious exaltation which it hath received in the person of Christ. And this must needs make thoughts of him full of refreshment unto their souls. Let us take care of our persons,—the glory of our nature is safe in him. For,—

II. In him the *relation of our nature unto God is eternally secured.* We were created in a covenant relation unto God. Our nature was related unto him in a way of friendship, of likeness, and complacency. But the bond of this relation and union was quickly broken, by our apostasy from him. Hereon our whole nature became to be at the utmost moral distance from God, and enmity against him; which is the depth of misery. But God, in infinite wisdom and grace, did design once more to recover it, and take it again near unto himself. And he would do it in such a way as should render it utterly impossible that there should ever be a separation between him and it any more. Heaven and earth may pass away, but there shall never be a dissolution of the union between God and our nature any more. He did it, therefore, by assuming it into a substantial union with himself,

in the person of the Son. Hereby the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in it bodily, or substantially, and eternally. Hereby is its relation unto God eternally secured. And among all the mysterious excellencies which relate hereunto, there are two which continually present themselves unto our consideration.

1. That this nature of ours *is capable of this glorious exaltation and subsistence in God.* No creature could conceive how omnipotent wisdom, power, and goodness, could actuate themselves unto the production of this effect. The mystery hereof is the object of the admiration of angels, and will be so of the whole church, unto all eternity. What is revealed concerning the glory, way, and manner of it, in the Scripture, I have declared in my treatise concerning *the Mystery of Godliness, or the Person of Christ.* What mind can conceive, what tongue can express, who can sufficiently admire, the wisdom, goodness, and condescension of God herein? And whereas he hath proposed unto us this glorious object of our faith and meditation, how vile and foolish are we, if we spend our thoughts about other things in a neglect of it!

2. This is also an ineffable *pledge* of the *love* of God unto our nature. For although he will not take it in any other instance, save that of the man Christ Jesus, into this relation with himself, by virtue of personal union, yet therein he hath given a glorious pledge of his love unto, and valuation of, that nature. For "verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." And this kindness extends unto our persons, as participant of that nature. For he designed this glory unto the man Christ Jesus, that he might be the first-born of the new creation, that we might be made conformable unto him according to our measure; and as the members of that body, whereof he is the head, we are participant in this glory.

III. It is he in whom our nature hath been carried successfully and victoriously through all the oppositions that it is liable unto, and even death itself. But the glory hereof I shall speak unto distinctly in its proper place, which follows, and therefore shall here pass it by.

IV. He it is who in himself hath given us a pledge of the capacity of our nature to inhabit *those blessed regions of light,* which are far above these aspectable heavens. Here we dwell in tabernacles of clay, that are "crushed before the moth,"—such as cannot be raised, so as to abide one foot-breadth above the earth we tread upon. The heavenly luminaries which we can behold appear too great and glorious for our cohabitation. We are as grasshoppers in our own eyes, in comparison of those gigantic beings; and they seem to dwell in places which would immediately swallow up and extinguish our natures. How, then, shall we entertain an apprehension of being carried and exalted above them all? to have an everlasting subsistence in places incomprehensibly more glorious than the orbs wherein they reside? What capacity is there in our nature of such a habitation? But hereof the Lord Christ hath given us a pledge in himself. Our nature in him is passed through these aspectable heavens, and is exalted far above them. Its eternal habitation is in the blessed regions of light and glory; and he hath promised that where he is, there we shall be, and that for ever.

Other encouragements there are innumerable to stir us up unto diligence in the discharge of the duty here proposed,—namely, a *continual contemplation of the glory of Christ, in his person, office, and grace.* Some of them, the principal of them which I have any acquaintance with, are represented in the ensuing Discourse. I shall therefore here add the peculiar advantage which we may obtain in the diligent discharge of this duty; which is,—*that it will carry us cheerfully, comfortably, and victoriously through life and death, and all that we have to conflict withal in either of them.*

And let it be remembered, that I do here suppose what is written on this sub-

ject in the ensuing Discourse as being designed to prepare the minds of the readers for the due improvement of it.

As unto *this present life*, it is well known what it is unto the most of them who concern themselves in these things. Temptations, afflictions, changes, sorrows, dangers, fears, sickness, and pains, do fill up no small part of it. And on the other hand, all our earthly relishes, refreshments, and comforts, are uncertain, transitory, and unsatisfactory; all things of each sort being imbittered by the remainders of sin. Hence everything wherein we are concerned hath the root of trouble and sorrow in it. Some labour under wants, poverty, and straits all their days; and some have very few hours free from pains and sickness. And all these things, with others of an alike nature, are heightened at present by the calamitous season wherein our lot is fallen. All things almost in all nations are filled with confusions, disorders, dangers, distresses, and troubles; wars and rumours of wars do abound, with tokens of farther approaching judgments; distress of nations, with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. There is in many places "no peace unto him that goeth out, nor to him that cometh in, but great vexations are on the inhabitants of the world: nation is destroyed of nation, and city of city; for God doth vex them with all adversity." [2 Chron. xv. 5, 6.] And in the meantime, vexation with the ungodly deeds of wicked men doth greatly further the troubles of life; the sufferings of many also for the testimony of their consciences are deplorable, with the divisions and animosities that abound amongst all sorts of Christians.

But the shortness, the vanity, the miseries of human life, have been the subject of the complaints of all sorts of considering persons, heathens as well as Christians; nor is it my present business to insist upon them. My inquiry is only after the relief which we may obtain against all these evils, that we faint not under them, that we may have the victory over them.

This in general is declared by the apostle, 2 Cor. iv., "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." But for this cause "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Our beholding by faith things that are not seen, things spiritual and eternal, will alleviate all our afflictions,—make their burden light, and preserve our souls from fainting under them. Of these things the glory of Christ, whereof we treat, is the principal, and in a due sense comprehensive of them all. For we behold the glory of God himself "in the face of Jesus Christ." He that can at all times retreat unto the contemplation of this glory, will be carried above the perplexing prevailing sense of any of these evils, of a confluence of them all. "Crus nil sentit in nervo, dum animus est in cœlo."

It is a woful kind of life, when men scramble for poor perishing reliefs in their distresses. This is the universal remedy and cure,—the only balsam for all our diseases. Whatever presseth, urgeth, perplexeth, if we can but retreat in our minds unto a view of this glory, and a due consideration of our own interest therein, comfort and supportment will be administered unto us. Wicked men, in their distresses (which sometimes overtake even them also), are like "a troubled sea, that cannot rest." Others are heartless, and despond,—not without secret repinings at the wise disposals of Divine Providence, especially when they look on the better condition (as they suppose) of others. And the best of us all are apt to wax faint and weary when these things press upon us in an unusual manner, or under their long con-

tinuance, without a prospect of relief. This is the stronghold which such prisoners of hope are to turn themselves unto. In this contemplation of the glory of Christ they will find rest unto their own souls. For,—

1. It will herein, and in the discharge of this duty, be made evident how slight and inconsiderable all these things are from whence our troubles and distresses do arise. For they all grow on this root of an *over-valuation of temporal things*. And unless we can arrive unto a fixed judgment that all things here below are transitory and perishing, reaching only unto the outward man, or the body, (perhaps unto the killing of it),—that the best of them have nothing that is truly substantial or abiding in them,—that there are other things, wherein we have an assured interest, that are incomparably better than they, and above them,—it is impossible but that we must spend our lives in fears, sorrows, and distractions. One real view of the glory of Christ, and of our own concernment therein, will give us a full relief in this matter. For what are all the things of this life? What is the good or evil of them in comparison of an interest in this transcendent glory? When we have due apprehensions hereof,—when our minds are possessed with thoughts of it,—when our affections reach out after its enjoyments,—let pain, and sickness, and sorrows, and fears, and dangers, and death, say what they will, we shall have in readiness wherewith to combat with them and overcome them; and that on this consideration, that they are all outward, transitory, and passing away, whereas our minds are fixed on those things which are eternal, and filled with incomprehensible glory.

2. The minds of men are apt by their troubles to be cast into disorder, to be tossed up and down, and disquieted with various affections and passions. So the Psalmist found it in himself in the time of his distress; whence he calls himself unto that account, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" And, indeed, the mind on all such occasions is its own greatest troubler. It is apt to let loose its passions of fear and sorrow, which act themselves in innumerable perplexing thoughts, until it is carried utterly out of its own power. But in this state a due contemplation of the glory of Christ will restore and compose the mind,—bring it into a sedate, quiet frame, wherein faith will be able to say unto the winds and waves of distempered passions, "Peace, be still;" and they shall obey it.

3. It is the way and means of conveying a sense of God's love unto our souls; which is that alone where ultimately we find rest in the midst of all the troubles of this life; as the apostle declares, Rom. v. 2–5. It is the Spirit of God who alone communicates a sense of this love unto our souls; it is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Howbeit, there are ways and means to be used on our part, whereby we may be disposed and made meet to receive these communications of divine love. Among these the principal is the contemplation of the glory of Christ insisted on, and of God the Father in him. It is the season, it is the way and means, at which and whereby the Holy Ghost will give a sense of the love of God unto us, causing us thereon to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." This will be made evident in the ensuing Discourse. This will lift the minds and hearts of believers above all the troubles of this life, and is the sovereign antidote that will expel all the poison that is in them; which otherwise might perplex and enslave their souls.

I have but touched on these things, as designing to enlarge somewhat on that which doth ensue. And this is the advantage we may have in the discharge of this duty with respect unto death itself: It is the assiduous contemplation of the glory of Christ which will carry us cheerfully and comfortably into it, and through it. My principal work having been now for a long season to die daily, as living in a continual expectation of my dissolution, I shall on this occasion acquaint the reader with some few of my thoughts and reliefs with reference unto death itself.

There are sundry things required of us, that we may be able to encounter death cheerfully, constantly, and victoriously. For want of these, or some of them, I have known gracious souls who have lived in a kind of bondage for fear of death all their days. We know not how God will manage any of our minds and souls in that season, in that trial; for he acts towards us in all such things in a way of sovereignty. But these are the things which he requireth of us in a way of duty:—

First, Peculiar actings of faith to resign and commit our departing souls into the hand of him who is able to receive them, to keep and preserve them, as also to dispose of them into a state of rest and blessedness, are required of us.

The soul is now parting with all things here below, and that for ever. None of all the things which it hath seen, heard, or enjoyed, by its outward senses, can be prevailed with to stay with it one hour, or to take one step with it in the voyage wherein it is engaged. It must alone by itself launch into eternity. It is entering an invisible world, which it knows no more of than it hath received by faith. None hath come from the dead to inform us of the state of the other world; yea, God seems on purpose so to conceal it from us, that we should have no evidence of it, at least as unto the manner of things in it, but what is given unto faith by divine revelation. Hence those who died and were raised again from the dead unto any continuance among men, as Lazarus, probably knew nothing of the invisible state. Their souls were preserved by the power of God in their being, but bound up as unto present operations. This made a great emperor cry out, on the approach of death, "O animula, tremula, vagula, blandula; quæ nunc abibis in loca horrida, squalida," &c.—"O poor, trembling, wandering soul, into what places of darkness and defilement art thou going?"[1]

How is it like to be after the few moments which, under the pangs of death, we have to continue in this world? Is it an annihilation that lies at the door? Is death the destruction of our whole being, so as that after it we shall be no more? So some would have the state of things to be. Is it a state of subsistence in a wandering condition, up and down the world, under the influence of other more powerful spirits that rule in the air, visiting tombs and solitary places, and sometimes making appearances of themselves by the impressions of those more powerful spirits; as some imagine from the story concerning Samuel and the witch of Endor, and as it is commonly received in the Papacy, out of a compliance with their imagination of purgatory? Or is it a state of universal misery and woe? a state incapable of comfort or joy? Let them pretend what they please, who can understand no comfort or joy in this life but what they receive by their senses;—they can look for nothing else. And whatever be the state of this invisible world, the soul can undertake nothing of its own conduct after its departure from the body. It knows that it must be absolutely at the disposal of another.

Wherefore no man can comfortably venture on and into this condition, but in the exercise of that faith which enables him to resign and give up his departing soul into the hand of God, who alone is able to receive it, and to dispose it into a condition of rest and blessedness. So speaks the apostle, "I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Herein, as in all other graces, is our Lord Jesus Christ our great example. He resigned his departing spirit into the hands of his Father, to be owned and pre-

[1] Dr Owen refers to the Emperor Hadrian, who, among other short poems which have been ascribed to him, is said to have composed, towards his death, the following lines:—

"Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca."

served by him, in its state of separation: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," Luke xxiii. 46; as did the Psalmist, his type, in an alike condition, Ps. xxxi. 5. But the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ herein,—the object and exercise of it, what he believed and trusted unto in this resignation of his spirit into the hand of God,—is at large expressed in the 16th Psalm. "I have," said he, "set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." He left his soul in the hand of God, in full assurance that it should suffer no evil in its state of separation, but should be brought again with his body into a blessed resurrection and eternal glory. So Stephen resigned his soul, departing under violence, into the hands of Christ himself. When he died he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

This is the last victorious act of faith, wherein its conquest over its last enemy death itself doth consist. Herein the soul says in and unto itself, "Thou art now taking leave of time unto eternity; all things about thee are departing as shades, and will immediately disappear. The things which thou art entering into are yet invisible; such as 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor will they enter into the heart of man fully to conceive.' Now, therefore, with quietness and confidence give up thyself unto the sovereign power, grace, truth, and faithfulness of God, and thou shalt find assured rest and peace."

But Jesus Christ it is who doth immediately receive the souls of them who believe in him. So we see in the instance of Stephen. And what can be a greater encouragement to resign them into his hands, than a daily contemplation of his glory, in his person, his power, his exaltation, his office, and grace? Who that believes in him, that belongs unto him, can fear to commit his departing spirit unto his love, power, and care? Even we also shall hereby in our dying moments see by faith heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ready to receive us. This, added unto the love which all believers have unto the Lord Jesus, which is inflamed by contemplation of his glory, and their desires to be with him where he is, will strengthen and confirm our minds in the resignation of our departing souls into his hand.

Secondly, It is required in us, unto the same end, that we be *ready and willing to part with the flesh*, wherewith we are clothed, with all things that are useful and desirable thereunto. The alliance, the relation, the friendship, the union that are between the soul and the body, are the greatest, the nearest, the firmest that are or can be among mere created beings. There is nothing like it,—nothing equal unto it. The union of three persons in the one single divine nature, and the union of two natures in one person of Christ, are infinite, ineffable, and exempted from all comparison. But among created beings, the union of these two essential parts of the same nature in one person is most excellent. Nor is anything equal to it, or like it, found in any other creatures. Those who among them have most of life have either no bodies, as angels; or no souls but what perish with them, as all brute creatures below.

Angels, being pure, immaterial spirits, have nothing in them, nothing belonging unto their essence, that can die. Beasts have nothing in them that can live when their bodies die. The soul of a beast cannot be preserved in a separate condition, no, not by an act of almighty power; for it is not, and that which is not cannot live. It is nothing but the body itself in an act of its material powers.

Only the nature of man, in all the works of God, is capable of this convulsion. The essential parts of it are separable by death, the one continuing to exist and act

its especial powers in a separate state or condition. The powers of the whole entire nature, acting in soul and body in conjunction, are all scattered and lost by death. But the powers of one essential part of the same nature—that is, of the soul—are preserved after death in a more perfect acting and exercise than before. This is peculiar unto human nature, as a mean partaking of heaven and earth,—of the perfection of angels above, and of the imperfection of the beasts below. Only there is this difference in these things:—Our participation of the heavenly, spiritual perfections of the angelical nature is for eternity; our participation of the imperfections of the animate creatures here below is but for a season. For God hath designed our bodies unto such a glorious refinement at the resurrection, as that they shall have no more alliance unto that brutish nature which perisheth for ever; for we shall be ἰσάγγελοι,—like unto angels, or equal to them. Our bodies shall no more be capable of those acts and operations which are now common to us with other living creatures here below.

This is the pre-eminence of the nature of man, as the wise man declares. For unto that objection of atheistical Epicureans, "As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast. All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again,"—he granteth that, as unto their bodies, it is for a season in them we have a present participation of their nature; but, saith he, here lieth the difference, "Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Eccles. iii. 21. Unless we know this, unless we consider the different state of the spirit of men and beasts, we cannot be delivered from this atheism; but the thoughts hereof will set us at liberty from it. They die in like manner, and their bodies go equally to the dust for a season; but the beast hath no spirit, no soul, but what dies with the body and goes to the dust. If they had, their bodies also must be raised again unto a conjunction with them; otherwise, death would produce a new race of creatures unto eternity. But man hath an immortal soul, saith he, a heavenly spirit, which, when the body goes into the dust for a season, ascends to heaven (where the guilt of sin and the curse of the law interpose not), from whence it is there to exist and to act all its native powers in a state of blessedness.

But, as I said, by reason of this peculiar intimate union and relation between the soul and body, there is in the whole nature a fixed aversation from a dissolution. The soul and body are naturally and necessarily unwilling to fall into a state of separation, wherein the one shall cease to be what it was, and the other knows not clearly how it shall subsist. The body claspeth about the soul, and the soul receiveth strange impressions from its embraces; the entire nature, existing in the union of them both, being unalterably averse unto a dissolution.

Wherefore, unless we can overcome this inclination, we can never die comfortably or cheerfully. We would, indeed, rather choose to be "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life," that the clothing of glory might come on our whole nature, soul and body, without dissolution. But if this may not be, yet then do believers so conquer this inclination by faith and views of the glory of Christ, as to attain a desire of this dissolution. So the apostle testifies of himself, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" than to abide here, Phil. i. 23. Saith he, Τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων,—not an ordinary desire, not that which worketh in me now and then; but a constant, habitual inclination, working in vehement acts and desires. And what doth he so desire? It is ἀναλῦσαι, —"to depart," say we, out of this body, from this tabernacle, to leave it for a season. But it is such a departure as consists in the *dissolution* of the present state of his being, that it should not be what it is. But how is it possible that a man should attain such an inclination unto, such a readiness for, such a vehement desire of, a

dissolution? It is from a view by faith of Christ and his glory, whence the soul is satisfied that to be with him is incomparably better than in its present state and condition.

He, therefore, that would die comfortably, must be able to say within himself and to himself, "Die, then, thou frail and sinful flesh: 'dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' I yield thee up unto the righteous doom of the Holy One. Yet therein also I give thee into the hand of the great Refiner, who will hide thee in thy grave, and by thy consumption purify thee from all thy corruption and disposition to evil. And otherwise this will not be. After a long sincere endeavour for the mortification of all sin, I find it will never be absolutely perfect, but by this reduction into the dust. Thou shalt no more be a residence for the least remainder of sin unto eternity, nor any clog unto my soul in its actings on God. Rest therefore in hope; for God, in his appointed season, when he shall have a desire unto the work of his hands, will call unto thee, and thou shalt answer him out of the dust. Then shall he, by an act of his almighty power, not only restore thee unto thy pristine glory, as at the first creation, when thou wast the pure workmanship of his hands, but enrich and adorn thee with inconceivable privileges and advantages. Be not, then, afraid; away with all reluctancy. Go into the dust,—rest in hope; 'for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.'"

That which will enable us hereunto, in an eminent manner, is that view and consideration of the glory of Christ which is the subject of the ensuing Meditations. For He who is now possessed of all that glory underwent this dissolution of nature as truly and really as ever we shall do.

Thirdly, There is required hereunto a readiness to comply with the *times and seasons* wherein God would have us depart and leave this world. Many think they shall be willing to die when their time is come; but they have many reasons, as they suppose, to desire that it may not yet be,—which, for the most part, arise merely from fear and aversation of death. Some desire to live that they may see more of that glorious work of God for his church, which they believe he will accomplish. So Moses prayed that he might not die in the wilderness, but go over Jordan, and see the good land, and that goodly mountain and Lebanon, the seat of the church, and of the worship of God; which yet God thought meet to deny unto him. And this denial of the request of Moses, made on the highest consideration possible, is instructive unto all in the like case. Others may judge themselves to have some work to do in the world, wherein they suppose that the glory of God and good of the church are concerned; and therefore would be spared for a season. Paul knew not clearly whether it were not best for him to abide a while longer in the flesh on this account; and David often deprecates the present season of death because of the work which he had to do for God in the world. Others rise no higher than their own private interests or concerns with respect unto their persons, their families, their relations, and goods in this world. They would see these things in a better or more settled condition before they die, and then they shall be most willing so to do. But it is the love of life that lies at the bottom of all these desires in men; which of itself will never forsake them. But no man can die cheerfully or comfortably who lives not in a constant resignation of the time and season of his death unto the will of God, as well as himself with respect unto death itself. Our times are in his hand, at his sovereign disposal; and his will in all things must be complied withal. Without this resolution, without this resignation, no man can enjoy the least solid peace in this world.

Fourthly, As the times and seasons, so the *ways* and *means* of the approaches of death have especial trials; which, unless we are prepared for them, will keep us under bondage, with the fear of death itself. Long, wasting, wearing consumptions, burning fevers, strong pains of the stone, or the like from within; or sword, fire,

tortures, with shame and reproach from without, may be in the way of the access of death unto us. Some who have been wholly freed from all fears of death, as a dissolution of nature, who have looked on it as amiable and desirable in itself, have yet had great exercise in their minds about these ways of its approach: they have earnestly desired that this peculiar bitterness of the cup might be taken away. To get above all perplexities on the account of these things, is part of our wisdom in dying daily. And we are to have always in a readiness those graces and duties which are necessary thereunto. Such are a constant resignation of ourselves, in all events, unto the sovereign will, pleasure, and disposal of God. "May he not do what he will with his own?" Is it not right and meet it should be so? Is not his will in all things infinitely holy, wise, just, and good? Doth he not know what is best for us, and what conduceth most unto his own glory? Doth not he alone do so? So is it to live in the exercise of faith, that if God calls us unto any of those things which are peculiarly dreadful unto our natures, he will give us such supplies of spiritual strength and patience as shall enable us to undergo them, if not with ease and joy, yet with peace and quietness beyond our expectation. Multitudes have had experience that those things which, at a distance, have had an aspect of overwhelming dread, have been far from unsupportable in their approach, when strength hath been received from above to encounter with them. And, moreover, it is in this case required that we be frequent and steady in comparing these things with those which are eternal, both as unto the misery which we are freed from and that blessedness which is prepared for us. But I shall proceed no farther with these particulars.

There is none of all the things we have insisted on—neither the resignation of a departing soul into the hand of God, nor a willingness to lay down this flesh in the dust, nor a readiness to comply with the will of God, as to the times and seasons, or the way and manner of the approach of death—that can be attained unto, without a prospect of that glory that shall give us a new state far more excellent than what we here leave or depart from. This we cannot have, whatever we pretend, unless we have some present views of the glory of Christ. An apprehension of the future manifestation of it in heaven will not relieve us, if here we know not what it is, and wherein it doth consist,—if we have not some previous discovery of it in this life. This is that which will make all things easy and pleasant unto us, even death itself, as it is a means to bring us unto its full enjoyment.

Other great and glorious advantages, which may be obtained in the diligent discharge of the duty here proposed, might be insisted on, but that the things themselves discoursed of will evidently discover and direct us unto the spring and reasons of them; besides, weakness, weariness, and the near approaches of death do call me off from any farther labour in this kind.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

ON

THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

The Explication of the Text.

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."—JOHN xvii. 24.

The high priest under the law, when he was to enter into the holy place on the solemn day of atonement, was to take both his hands full of sweet incense from the golden table of incense, to carry along with him in his entrance. He had also a censer filled with fire, that was taken from the altar of burnt-offerings, where atonement was made for sin with blood. Upon his actual entrance through the veil, he put the incense on the fire in the censer until the cloud of its smoke covered the ark, and the mercy-seat. See Lev. xvi. 12, 13. And the end hereof was to present unto God, in the behalf of the people, a sweet-smelling savour from the sacrifice of propitiation. See the declaration of these things in our exposition of Heb. ix.

In answer unto this mystical type, the great High Priest of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, being to enter into the "holy place not made with hands," did, by the glorious prayer recorded in this chapter, influenced from the blood of his sacrifice, fill the heavens above, the glorious place of God's residence, with a cloud of incense, or the sweet perfume of his blessed intercession, typed by the incense offered by the high priest of old. By the same eternal fire wherewith he offered himself a bloody sacrifice to make atonement for sin, he kindled in his most holy soul those desires for the application of all its benefits unto his church which are here expressed, and wherein his intercession doth consist.

It is only one passage in the verse above named that at present I design an inquiry into. And this is the subject-matter of what the Lord Christ here desires in the behalf of those given him by the Father,—namely, THAT THEY MAY BEHOLD HIS GLORY.

It is evident that in this prayer the Lord Christ hath respect unto his own glory and the manifestation of it, which he had in the entrance asked of the Father, verses 4, 5. But in this place he hath not so much respect unto it *as his own*, as unto the advantage, benefit, satisfaction, and blessedness of his disciples, in the beholding of it. For these things were the end of all that mediatory glory which was given unto him. So Joseph charged his brethren, when he had revealed himself unto them, that they should tell his father of all his "glory in Egypt," Gen. xlv. 13. This he did, not for an *ostentation* of his own glory, but for the *satisfaction* which he knew his father would take in the knowledge of it. And such a manifestation of his glory unto his disciples doth the Lord Christ here desire, as might fill them with blessed satisfaction for evermore.

This alone, which is here prayed for, will give them such satisfaction, and nothing else. The hearts of believers are like the needle touched by the loadstone, which cannot rest until it comes to the point whereunto, by the secret virtue of it, it is directed. For being once touched by the love of Christ, receiving therein an impression of secret ineffable virtue, they will ever be in motion, and restless, until they come unto him, and *behold his glory.* That soul which can be satisfied without it,—that cannot be eternally satisfied with it,—is not partaker of the efficacy of his intercession.

I shall lay the foundation of the ensuing Meditations in this one assertion,—namely, *That one of the greatest privileges and advancements of believers, both in this world and unto eternity, consists in their* BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF CHRIST. This, therefore, He desires for them in this solemn intercession, as the complement of all his other requests in their behalf;—"That they may behold my glory,"—Ἵνα θεωρῶσι,—that they may see, view, behold, or contemplate on my glory. The reasons why I assign not this glorious privilege only unto the heavenly state, which is principally respected in this place, but apply it unto the state of believers in this world also, with their duties and privileges therein, shall be immediately declared.

All unbelievers do in their heart call Christ "Ichabod,"—"Where is the glory?" They see neither "form nor comeliness in him," that he should be desired. They look on him as Michal, Saul's daughter, did on David "dancing before the ark," when she despised him in her heart. They do not, indeed (many of them), "call Jesus anathema," but cry, "Hail, Master!" and then crucify him.

Hence have we so many cursed opinions advanced in derogation unto his glory,—some of them really destructive of all that is truly so; yea, denying the "only Lord that bought us," and substituting a false Christ in his room. And others there are who express their slight thoughts of him and his glory by bold, irreverent inquiries, of

what use his Person is in our religion; as though there were anything in our religion that hath either reality, substance, or truth, but by virtue of its relation thereunto. And, by their answers, they bring their own inquiries yet nearer unto the borders of blasphemy.

Never was there an age since the name of Christians was known upon the earth, wherein there was such a direct opposition made unto the Person and glory of Christ, as there is in that wherein we live. There were, indeed, in the first times of the church, swarms of proud, doting, brain-sick persons, who vented many foolish imaginations about him, which issued at length in Arianism, in whose ruins they were buried. The gates of hell in them prevailed not against the rock on which the church is built. But as it was said of Cæsar, "Solus accessit sobrius, ad perdendam rempublicam,"—"He alone went soberly about the destruction of the commonwealth;" so we now have great numbers who oppose the Person and glory of Christ, under a pretence of sobriety of reason, as they vainly plead. Yea, the disbelief of the mysteries of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God,—the sole foundation of Christian religion,—is so diffused in the world, as that it hath almost devoured the power and vitals of it. And not a few, who dare not yet express their minds, do give broad intimations of their intentions and good-will towards him, in making them the object of their scorn and reproach who desire to know nothing but him, and him crucified.

God, in his appointed time, will effectually vindicate his honour and glory from the vain attempts of men of corrupt minds against them.

In the meantime, it is the duty of all those who "love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," to give testimony in a peculiar manner unto his divine Person and glory, according unto their several capacities, because of the opposition that is made against them.

I have thought myself on many accounts obliged to cast my mite into this treasury. And I have chosen so to do, not in a way of *controversy* (which formerly I have engaged in), but so as, together with the vindication of the truth, to promote the strengthening of the faith of true believers, their edification in the knowledge of it; and to express the experience which they have, or may have, of the power and reality of these things.

That which at present I design to demonstrate is, that the beholding of the glory of Christ is one of the greatest privileges and advancements that believers are capable of in this world, or that which is to come. It is that whereby they are first gradually conformed unto it, and then fixed in the eternal enjoyment of it. For here in this life, beholding his glory, they are changed or transformed into the likeness of it, 2 Cor. iii. 18; and hereafter they shall be "for ever like unto him," because they "shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2.

Hereon do our present comforts and future blessedness depend. This is the life and reward of our souls. "He that hath seen him hath seen the Father also," John xiv. 9. For we discern the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God only in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

There are, therefore, two ways or degrees of beholding the glory of Christ, which are constantly distinguished in the Scripture. The one is by *faith*, in this world,—which is "the evidence of things not seen;" the other is by *sight*, or immediate vision in eternity, 2 Cor. v. 7, "We walk by faith, and not by sight." We do so whilst we are in this world, "whilst we are present in the body, and absent from the Lord," verse 8. But we shall live and walk by sight hereafter. And it is the Lord Christ and his glory which are the immediate object both of this faith and sight. For we here "behold him darkly in a glass" (that is, by faith); "but we shall see him face to face" (by immediate vision). "Now we know him in part; but then we shall know him as we are known," 1 Cor. xiii. 12. What is the difference between these two ways of beholding the glory of Christ shall be afterward declared.

It is the second way—namely, by *vision* in the light of glory—that is principally included in that prayer of our blessed Saviour, that his disciples may be where he is, to behold his glory. But I shall not confine my inquiry thereunto; nor doth our Lord Jesus exclude from his desire that sight of his glory which we have by faith in this world, but prays for the perfection of it in heaven. It is therefore the first way that, in the first place, I shall insist upon; and that for the reasons ensuing:—

1. No man shall ever behold the glory of Christ by *sight* hereafter, who doth not in some measure behold it by *faith* here in this world. Grace is a necessary preparation for glory, and faith for sight. Where the subject (the soul) is not previously seasoned with grace and faith, it is not capable of glory or vision. Nay, persons not disposed hereby unto it cannot desire it, whatever they pretend; they only deceive their own souls in supposing that so they do. Most men will say with confidence, living and dying, *that they desire to be with Christ, and to behold his glory;* but they can give no reason why they should desire any such thing,—only they think it somewhat that is better than to be in that evil condition which otherwise they must be cast into for ever, when they can be here no more. If a man pretend himself to be enamoured on, or greatly to desire, what he never saw, nor was ever represented unto him, he doth but dote on his own imaginations. And the pretended desires of many to behold the glory of Christ in heaven, who have no view of it by faith whilst they are here in this world, are nothing but self-deceiving imaginations.

So do the Papists delude themselves. Their carnal affections are excited by their outward senses to delight in images of Christ,—in his sufferings, his resurrection, and glory above. Hereon they satisfy themselves that they behold the glory of Christ himself, and that with love and great delight. But whereas there is not the least true representation made of the Lord Christ or his glory in these things,—that being confined absolutely unto the Gospel alone, and this way of attempting it being laid under a severe interdict,—they do but sport themselves with their own deceivings.

The apostle tells us concerning himself and other believers, when the Lord Christ was present and conversed with them in the days of his flesh, that they "saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. And we may inquire, what was this glory of Christ which they so saw, and by what means they obtained a prospect of it. For,—1. It was not the glory of his *outward condition*, as we behold the glory and grandeur of the kings and potentates of the earth; for he made himself of no reputation, but being in the form of a servant, he walked in the condition of a man of low degree. The secular grandeur of his pretended Vicar makes no representation of that glory of his which his disciples saw. He kept no court, nor house of entertainment, nor (though he made all things) had of his own where to lay his head. Nor,—2. Was it with respect to the outward form of the *flesh which he was made*, wherein he took our nature on him, as we see the glory of a comely or beautiful person;—for he had therein neither form nor comeliness, that he should be desired, "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," Isa. lii. 14, liii. 2, 3. All things appeared in him as became "a man of sorrows." Nor,—3. Was it absolutely the *eternal essential glory of his divine nature* that is intended; for this no man can see in this world. What we shall attain in a view thereof hereafter we know not. But,—4. It was his glory, as he was "full of grace and truth." They saw the glory of his person and his office in the administration of grace and truth. And how or by what means did they see this glory of Christ? It was by faith, and no otherwise; for this privilege was granted unto them only who "received him," and believed on his name, John i. 12. This was that glory which the Baptist saw, when, upon his coming unto him, he said unto all that were present, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" verses 29–33.

Wherefore let no man deceive himself; he that hath no sight of the glory of Christ here, shall never have any of it hereafter unto his advantage. It is not, therefore, unto edification to discourse of beholding the glory of Christ in heaven by vision, until we go through a trial whether we see anything of it in this world by faith or no.

2. The beholding of Christ in glory is that which in itself is too high, illustrious, and marvellous for us in our present condition. It hath a splendour and glory too great for our present spiritual visible [visive] faculty; as the direct, immediate sight of the sun darkens our sight, and doth not relieve or strengthen it at all. Wherefore we have no way to take into our minds any true spiritual apprehensions of the nature of immediate vision, or what it is to see the glory of Christ in heaven, but by that view which we have by faith in this life of the same glory. Whatever otherwise falls into our minds is but conjecture and imagination; such as are the contemplations of most about heavenly things.

I have seen and read somewhat of the writings of learned men concerning the state of future glory; some of them are filled with excellent notions of truth, and elegancy of speech, whereby they cannot but much affect the minds of them who duly consider what they say. But I know not well whence it comes to pass, many complain that, in reading of such discourses, they are like a man who "beholds his natural face in a glass, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was;" as one of old complained to the same purpose upon his perusal of Plato's contemplations about the immortality of the soul. The things spoken do not abide nor incorporate with our minds. They please and refresh for a little while, like a shower of rain in a dry season, that soaketh not unto the roots of things; the power of them doth not enter into us. Is it not all from hence, that their notions of future things are not educed out of the experience which we have of the beginnings of them in this world? without which they can make no permanent abode in our minds, nor continue any influence upon our affections. Yea, the soul is disturbed, not edified, in all contemplations of future glory, when things are proposed unto it whereof in this life it hath neither foretaste, sense, experience, nor evidence. No man ought to look for anything in heaven, but what one way or other he hath some experience of in this life. If men were fully persuaded hereof, they would be, it may be, more in the exercise of faith and love about heavenly things than for the most part they are. At present they know not what they enjoy, and they look for they know not what.

Hence is it that men, utterly strangers unto all experience of the beginning of glory in themselves as an effect of faith, have filled their divine worship with images, pictures, and music, to represent unto themselves somewhat of that glory which they fancy to be above. For into that which is truly so, they have no prospect, or can have; because they have no experience of its power in themselves, nor do they taste of its goodness by any of its first-fruits in their own minds. Wherefore by that view alone, and not otherwise, which we have of

the glory of Christ by faith here in this world, we may attain such blessed conceptions of our beholding his glory above by immediate vision, as shall draw out our hearts unto the admiration of it and desires of its full enjoyment.

3. Herein, then, our present *edification* is principally concerned; for in this present beholding of the glory of Christ, the life and power of faith are most eminently acted. And from this exercise of faith doth love unto Christ principally, if not solely, arise and spring. If, therefore, we desire to have faith in its vigour or love in its power, giving rest, complacency, and satisfaction unto our own souls, we are to seek for them in the diligent discharge of this duty;—elsewhere they will not be found. Herein would I live;—herein would I die;—hereon would I dwell in my thoughts and affections, to the withering and consumption of all the painted beauties of this world, unto the crucifying all things here below, until they become unto me a dead and deformed thing, no way meet for affectionate embraces.

For these and the like reasons I shall first inquire into our beholding of the glory of Christ in this world by faith; and therein endeavour to lead the souls of them that believe into the more retired walks of faith, love, and holy meditation, "whereby the King is held in the galleries," Cant. vii. 5.

But because there is no benefit in, nor advantage by, the contemplation of this sacred truth, but what consists in an improvement of the practice of the duty declared in it,—namely, the constant beholding of the glory of Christ by faith,—I shall, for the promotion of it, premise some few advantages which we may have thereby.

1. We shall hereby be made *fit and meet* for heaven. Every man is not so who desires it, and hopes for it; for some are not only unworthy of it, and excluded from it, by reason of sin, but they are unmeet for it, and incapable of any advantage by it. All men, indeed, think themselves fit enough for glory (what should hinder them?) if they could attain it; but it is because they know not what it is. Men shall not be clothed with glory, as it were, whether they will or no. It is to be received in that exercise of the faculties of their souls which such persons have no ability for. Music hath no pleasure in it unto them that cannot hear; nor the most beautiful colours, unto them that cannot see. It would be no benefit unto a fish, to take him from the bottom of the ocean, filled with cold and darkness, and to place him under the beams of the sun; for he is no way meet to receive any refreshment thereby. Heaven itself would not be more advantageous unto persons not renewed by the Spirit of grace in this life.

Hence the apostle gives "thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. i. 12. Indeed, the beginning here, and the fulness of glory here-

after, are communicated unto believers by an almighty act of the will and grace of God. But yet he hath ordained ways and means whereby they may be made meet receptive subjects of the glory so to be communicated unto them. That this way and means is by the beholding of the glory of Christ by faith shall be fully declared in our progress. This, therefore, should excite us unto this duty; for all our present glory consists in our preparation for future glory.

2. No man can by faith take a real view of this glory, but virtue *will proceed from it in a transforming power* to change him "into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. How this is done, and how we become like unto Christ by beholding his glory, shall be fully declared in our progress.

3. The constant contemplation of the glory of Christ will give rest, satisfaction, and complacency unto the souls of them who are exercised therein. Our minds are apt to be filled with a multitude of perplexed thoughts;—fears, cares, dangers, distresses, passions, and lusts, do make various impressions on the minds of men, filling them with disorder, darkness, and confusion. But where the soul is fixed in its thoughts and contemplations on this glorious object, it will be brought into and kept in a holy, serene, spiritual frame. For "to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." And this it doth by taking off our hearts from all undue regard unto all things below, in comparison of the great worth, beauty, and glory of what we are conversant withal. See Phil. iii. 7–11. A defect herein makes many of us strangers unto a heavenly life, and to live beneath the spiritual refreshments and satisfactions that the Gospel doth tender unto us.

4. The sight of the glory of Christ is the spring and cause of our everlasting blessedness. "We shall ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17, or "be with Christ," which is best of all, Phil. i. 23. For there shall we "behold his glory," John xvii. 24; and by "seeing him as he is, we shall be made like him," 1 John iii. 2;—which is our everlasting blessedness.

The enjoyment of God by sight is commonly called the BEATIFICAL VISION; and it is the sole fountain of all the actings of our souls in the state of blessedness: which the old philosophers knew nothing of; neither do we know distinctly what they are, or what is this sight of God. Howbeit, this we know, that God in his immense essence is invisible unto our corporeal eyes, and will be so to eternity; as also incomprehensible unto our minds. For nothing can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite, but what is itself infinite. Wherefore the blessed and blessing sight which we shall have of God will be always "in the face of Jesus Christ." Therein will that manifestation of the glory of God, in his infinite perfections, and all their

blessed operations, so shine into our souls, as shall immediately fill us with peace, rest, and glory.

These things we here admire, but cannot comprehend. We know not well what we say when we speak of them: yet is there in true believers a foresight and foretaste of this glorious condition. There enters sometimes, by the Word and Spirit, into their hearts such a sense of the *uncreated glory* of God, shining forth in Christ, as affects and satiates their souls with ineffable joy. Hence ariseth that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," keeping "our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ," Phil. iv. 7. "Christ," in believers, "the hope of glory," gives them to taste of the first-fruits of it; yea, sometimes to bathe their souls in the fountain of life, and to drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand. Where any are utterly unacquainted with these things, they are carnal, yea, blind, and see nothing afar off. These enjoyments, indeed, are rare, and for the most part of short continuance. "Rara hora, brevis mora." But it is from our own sloth and darkness that we do not enjoy more visits of this grace, and that the dawnings of glory do not more shine on our souls. Such things as these may excite us to diligence in the duty proposed unto us.

And I shall inquire,—1. *What* is that glory of Christ which we do or may behold by faith? 2. *How* do we behold it? 3. *Wherein* our doing so differs from immediate vision in heaven? And in the whole we shall endeavour an answer unto the inquiry made unto the spouse, by the daughters of Jerusalem, Cant. v. 9, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?"

CHAPTER II.

The Glory of the Person of Christ, as the only Representative of God unto the Church.

The glory of Christ is the glory of the person of Christ. So he calls it Τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν, John xvii. 24, "That glory which is mine," which belongeth to me, unto my person.

The person of Christ may be considered two ways:—1. *Absolutely* in itself. 2. In the *susception* and discharge of his office, with what ensued thereon. His glory on these distinct accounts is distinct and different; but all equally his own. How in both respects we may behold it by faith, is that which we inquire into.

The first thing wherein we may behold the glory of the person of Christ, God and man, which was given him of his Father, consists in the representation of the nature of God, and of the divine person of the Father, unto the church in him; for we behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Otherwise we know it not, we see it not, we see nothing of it; *that* is the way of seeing and knowing God, declared in the Scripture as our duty and blessedness. The glory of God comprehends both the holy properties of his nature and the counsels of his will; and "the light of the knowledge" of these things we have only "in the face" or person "of Jesus Christ." Whatever obscure, imperfect notions we may have of them other ways, we cannot have φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ, "the light of the" illuminating, irradiating "knowledge of the glory of God," which may enlighten our minds and sanctify our hearts, but only ἐν προσώπῳ, "in the face" or person "of Jesus Christ:" for he is "the image of God," 2 Cor. iv. 4; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3; "the image of the invisible God," Col. i. 15. I do here only mention these things, because I have handled them at large in my discourse of the "Mystery of Godliness," or the Person of Christ; whereunto I refer the readers for their full declaration and vindication. Herein is he glorious, in that he is the great representative of the nature of God and his will unto us; which without him would have been eternally hid from us, or been invisible unto us;—we should never have seen God at any time, here nor hereafter, John i. 18.

In his divine person absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father. He is in the Father, and the Father in him, in the unity of the same divine essence, John xiv. 10. Now he is *with the Father*, John i. 1, in the distinction of his person, so is he his essential image, Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3. In his incarnation he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, 2 Cor. iv. 6; without whom our understandings can make no such approach unto the divine excellencies but that God continues to be unto us what he is in himself,—the "invisible God." In the face of Jesus Christ we see his glory.

This is the original glory of Christ, given him by his Father, and which by faith we may behold. He, and he alone, declares, represents, and makes known, unto angels and men, the essential glory of the invisible God, his attributes and his will; without which, a perpetual comparative darkness would have been on the whole creation, especially that part of it here below.

This is the foundation of our religion, the Rock whereon the church is built, the ground of all our hopes of salvation, of life and immortality: all is resolved into this,—namely, the *representation* that is

made of the nature and will of God in the person and office of Christ. If this fail us, we are lost for ever; if this Rock stand firm, the church is safe here, and shall be triumphant hereafter.

Herein, then, is the Lord Christ exceedingly glorious. Those who cannot behold this glory of his by faith,—namely, as he is the great divine ordinance to represent God unto us,—they know him not. In their worship of him, they worship but an image of their own devising.

Yea, in the ignorance and neglect hereof consists the formal nature of unbelief, even that which is inevitably ruinous unto the souls of men. He that discerns not the representation of the glory of God in the person of Christ unto the souls of men, is an unbeliever. Such was the state of the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles of old; they did not, they would not, they could not, behold the glory of God in him, nor how he did represent him. That this was both the cause and the formal nature of their unbelief, the apostle declares at large, 1 Cor. i. 21–25. Not to see the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and consequently all the other holy properties of his nature, in Christ, is to be an unbeliever.

The essence of faith consists in a due ascription of glory to God, Rom. iv. 20. This we cannot attain unto without the manifestation of those divine excellencies unto us wherein he is glorious. This is done in Christ alone, so as that we may glorify God in a saving and acceptable manner. He who discerns not the glory of divine wisdom, power, goodness, love, and grace, in the person and office of Christ, with the way of the salvation of sinners by him, is an unbeliever.

Hence the great design of the devil, in the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, was to blind the eyes of men, and fill their minds with prejudices, that they might not behold this glory of his; so the apostle gives an account of his success in this design, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." By various ways and methods of deceit, to secure the reputation he had got of being "god of this world," by pretences and appearances of supernatural power and wisdom, he laboured to blind the eyes of men with prejudices against that glorious light of the Gospel which proposed the Lord Christ as the only image of God. This blindness, this darkness is cured in them that believe, by the mighty power of God; for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath irradiated our hearts with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, verse 6,—wherein true saving faith doth consist. Under this darkness perished the unbelieving world of Jews and Gentiles: and such is the present condition of all by whom the divine person of Christ is denied; for

no mere creature can ever make a perfect representation of God unto us. But we must a little farther inquire into this mystery.

I. Since men fell from God by sin, it is no small part of their misery and punishment, that they are covered with thick darkness and *ignorance* of the nature of God. They know him not, they have not seen him at any time. Hence is that promise to the church in Christ, Isa. lx. 2, "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

The ancient philosophers made great inquiries into, and obtained many notions of, the Divine Being—its existence and excellencies. And these notions they adorned with great elegancy of speech, to allure others unto the admiration of them. Hereon they boasted themselves to be the only wise men in the world, Rom. i. 22, φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ,—they boasted that they were the wise. But we must abide in the judgment of the apostle concerning them in their inquiries; he assures us that the world in its wisdom—that is, these wise men in it by their wisdom—knew not God, 1 Cor. i. 21. And he calls the authors of their best notions, Atheists, or men "without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. For,—

1. They had no certain guide, rule, nor light, which, being attended unto, might lead them infallibly into the knowledge of the divine nature. All they had of this kind was their own λογισμοὶ, their reasonings or imaginations; whereby they commenced συζητητὰι τοῦ ἀιῶνος τούτου, "the great disputers of the world;" but in them they "waxed vain, and their foolish heart was darkened," Rom. i. 21. They did at best but endeavour ψηλαφᾷν, "to feel after God," as men do in the dark after what they cannot clearly discern, Acts xvii. 27. Among others, Cicero's book, "De Natura Deorum," gives us an exact account of the intention of the apostle in that expression. And it is at this day not want of wit, but hatred of the mysteries of our religion, which makes so many prone to forego all supernatural revelation, and to betake themselves unto a religion declared, as they suppose, by reason and the light of nature;—like bats and owls, who, being not able to bear the light of the sun, betake themselves unto the twilight, to the dawnings of light and darkness.

2. Whatever they did attain, as unto rational notions about things invisible and incomprehensible, yet could they never deliver themselves from such principles and practices in idolatry and all manner of flagitious sins, as that they could be of any benefit unto them. This is so effectually demonstrated by the apostle in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as that we need not to insist upon it.

Men may talk what they please of a light within them, or of the power of reason to conduct them unto that knowledge of God whereby

they may live unto him; but if they had nothing else, if they did not boast themselves of that light which hath its foundation and original in divine revelation alone, they would not excel them who, in the best management of their own reasonings, "knew not God," but waxed vain in their imaginations.

With respect unto this universal darkness,—that is, ignorance of God, with horrid confusion accompanying it in the minds of men,—Christ is called, and is, the "light of men," the "light of the world;" because in and by him alone this darkness is dispelled, as he is the "Sun of Righteousness."

II. This darkness in the minds of men, this ignorance of God, his nature and his will, was the original of all evil unto the world, and yet continues so to be. For,—

1. Hereon did Satan erect his kingdom and throne, obtaining in his design until he bare himself as "the god of this world," and was so esteemed by the most. He exalted himself by virtue of this darkness (as he is the "prince of darkness") into the place and room of God, as the object of the religious worship of men. For the things which the Gentiles sacrificed they sacrificed unto devils, and not to God, 1 Cor. x. 20; Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37; Gal. iv. 8. This is the territory of Satan; yea, the power and sceptre of his kingdom in the minds of the "children of disobedience." Hereby he maintains his dominion unto this day in many and great nations, and with individual persons innumerable.

2. This is the spring of all wickedness and confusion among men themselves. Hence arose that *flood of abominations* in the *old world*, which God took away with *a flood of desolation:* hence were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, which he revenged with "fire from heaven." In brief; all the rage, blood, confusion, desolations, cruelties, oppressions, villanies, which the world hath been and is filled withal, whereby the souls of men have been and are flooded into eternal destruction, have all arisen from this corrupt fountain of the ignorance of God.

3. Of such as those described we are the posterity and offspring. Our forefathers in this nation were given up unto as brutish a service of the devil as any nation under the sun. It is therefore an effect of infinite mercy, that the day hath dawned on us, poor Gentiles, and that the "day-spring from on high hath visited us." See the glory of this grace expressed, Eph. iii. 5–10. God might have left us to perish in the blindness and ignorance of our forefathers; but of his own accord, and by his own powerful grace alone, he hath "translated us out of darkness into his marvellous light." But, alas! the horrible ingratitude of men for the glorious light of the Gospel, and the abuse of it, will issue in a sore revenge.

God was known under the Old Testament by the revelation of his Word, and the institution of his worship. This was the glory and privilege of Israel, as the Psalmist declares, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." The church then knew him; yet so as that they had an apprehension that he dwelt in "thick darkness," where they could not have any clear views of him, Exod. xx. 21; Deut. v. 22; 1 Kings viii. 12; 2 Chron. vi. 1. And the reason why God so represented himself in *darkness* unto them, was, to instruct them in their imperfect state, wherein they could not comprehend that glory which should afterward be revealed. For as he is now made known in Christ, we see that "he is light, and in him there is no darkness at all."

4. Hitherto darkness in general covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, as unto the knowledge of God; only there was a twilight in the church. The day did not yet dawn, the "shadows did not flee away," nor the "day-star shine" in the hearts of men. But when the "Sun of Righteousness" did arise in his strength and beauty, when the Son of God "appeared in the flesh," and in the discharge of his office,—God himself, as unto his being, and manner of existence in three distinct persons, with all the glorious properties of the divine nature, was illustriously manifested unto them that did believe; and the light of the knowledge of them dispelled all the shadows that were in the church, and shone into the darkness which was in the world, so as that none continued ignorant of God but those who would not see. See John i. 5, 14, 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Herein is the Lord Christ *glorious*. And this is that which I shall now speak unto,—namely, how we may behold the glory of Christ in the representation and revelation that is made of God and his glory, in his person and office, unto all that do believe. For it is not so much the declaration of the nature of the things themselves, wherein the glory of Christ doth consist, as our way and duty in the beholding of them, which at present is designed.

He calls unto us, saying, "Behold me,—look unto me,—and be saved," Isa. xlv. 22. What is it that we see in Christ? what do we behold in him? He asketh that question concerning his church, "What will ye see in the Shulamite?" Whereto he answers, "As it were the company of two armies," Cant. vi. 13; or the two churches of the Old and New Testament, in order and beauty. We may inquire, What shall we, what do we see in him? Do we see him as "the image of the invisible God," representing him, his nature, properties, and will unto us? Do we see him as the "character," the "express image of the person of the Father," so that we have no need

of Philip's request, "Lord, show us the Father?" because having seen him, we have seen the Father also, John xiv. 9.

This is our first saving view of Christ, the first instance of our beholding his glory by faith. So to see him as to see God in him, is to behold his glory; for herein he is eternally glorious. And this is that glory whose view we ought to long for and labour after. And if we see it not, we are yet in darkness; yea, though we say we see, we are blind like others. So David longed and prayed for it, when yet he could behold it only in types and shadows, Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee;—to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." For there was in the sanctuary an obscure representation of the glory of God in Christ. How much more should we prize that view of it which we may have with open face, though yet "as in a glass!" 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Moses, when he had seen the works of God, which were great and marvellous, yet found not himself satisfied therewith; wherefore, after all, he prays that God "would show him his glory," Exod. xxxiii. 18. He knew that the ultimate rest, blessedness, and satisfaction of the soul, is not in seeing the works of God, but the glory of God himself. Therefore did he desire some immediate dawnings of it upon him in this world: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And if we have right apprehensions of the future state of blessedness, we cannot but have the same desire of seeing more of his glory in this life. But the question is, How we may attain it? If we are left unto ourselves in this inquiry, if we have no other way for it but the immediate fixing of our thoughts on the immensity of the divine nature, we must come every one to the conclusion that Agur makes on the like consideration, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" Prov. xxx. 2–4.

It is in Christ alone that we may have a clear, distinct view of the glory of God and his excellencies. For him, and him alone, hath he appointed the representative of himself unto us; and we shall take an account hereof in one or two especial instances. See John i. 18, xiv. 7–10; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Col. i. 15; Eph. iii. 4–10; Heb. i. 3.

1. Infinite *wisdom* is one of the most glorious properties of the divine nature; it is that which is directive of all the external works of God, wherein the glory of all the other excellencies of God is manifested: wherefore the manifestation of the whole glory of God pro-

ceeds originally from infinite wisdom. But, as Job speaks, "Where shall [this] wisdom be found; and what is the place of understanding? chap. xxviii. 12. "Can we by searching find out God? can we find out the Almighty unto perfection?" chap. xi. 7. As it is in itself an essential, eternal property of the divine nature, we can have no comprehension of it,—we can but adore it in that infinite distance wherein we stand from God; but in its operations and effects it may be discerned, for they are designed of God for its manifestation. Among these, the most excellent is the contrivance of the great work of the salvation of the church. So it is celebrated by the apostle, Eph. iii. 9, 10, "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

If we have any interest in God, if we have any hopes of blessedness in beholding of his glory unto eternity, we cannot but desire a view (such as is attainable) of this infinite, manifold wisdom of God in this life. But it is in Christ alone that we can discern anything of it; for him hath the Father chosen and sealed to represent it unto us. All the treasures of this wisdom are hid, laid up, and laid out in him;—herein lies the essence and form of faith. Believers by it do see the wisdom of God in Christ, in his person and office,—Christ the wisdom of God. Unbelievers see it not, as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. i. 22–24.

In beholding the glory of this infinite wisdom of God in Christ, we behold his own glory also,—the glory given him of his Father; for this is his glory, that in and by him, and him alone, the wisdom of God is manifested and represented unto us. When God appointed him as the great and only means of this end, he gave him honour and glory above the whole creation; for it is but little of divine wisdom which the works of it declare, in comparison of what is manifested in Christ Jesus. We no way deny or extenuate the manifestation that is made of the wisdom of God in the works of creation and providence. It is sufficient to detect the folly of atheism and idolatry; and was designed of God unto that end. But its comparative insufficiency—with respect unto the representation of it in Christ as to the ends of knowing God aright and living unto him—the Scripture doth abundantly attest. And the abuse of it was catholic [*i. e.*, universal], as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 20, &c. To see this wisdom clearly is our wisdom; and a due apprehension of it fills the souls of believers "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

2. We may also instance in the *love of God.* The apostle tells us that "God is love," 1 John iv. 8. Divine love is not to be considered

only in its effects, but in its nature and essence; and so it is God himself, for "God is love." And a blessed revelation this is of the divine nature; it casts out envy, hatred, malice, revenge, with all their fruits, in rage, fierceness, implacability, persecution, murder, into the territories of Satan. They belong not unto God in his nature or actings; for "God is love." So the same apostle tells us, that he who "slew his brother was of the wicked one," 1 John iii. 12. He was of the devil, his father, and his works did he do.

But the inquiry is as before,—How shall we have a view of this love, of God as love? by what way or means shall we behold the glory of it? It is hidden from all living, in God himself. The wise philosophers, who discoursed so much of the love of God, knew nothing of this, that "God is love." The most of the natural notions of men about it are corrupt, and the best of them weak and imperfect. Generally, the thoughts of men about it are, that he is of a facile and easy nature, one that they may make bold withal in all their occasions; as the Psalmist declares, Ps. l. 21. And whereas it must be learned in its effects, operations, and divine ways of its manifestation, those who know not Christ know nothing of them. And many things in providence do interpose to hinder our views of this love;—for although, indeed, "God is love," yet "his wrath is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men;" as all things at this day are filled with evidences of his anger and displeasure. How, then, shall we know, wherein shall we behold, the glory of God in this, that he is LOVE? The apostle declares it in the next words, 1 John iv. 9, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." This is the only evidence given us that "God is love." Hereby alone is the divine nature as such made known unto us,—namely, in the mission, person, and office of the Son of God; without this, all is in darkness as unto the true nature and supreme operation of this divine love.

Herein do we behold the glory of Christ himself, even in this life. This glory was given him of the Father,—namely, that he now should declare and evidence that "God is love;" and he did so, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Herein we may see how excellent, how beautiful, how glorious and desirable he is, seeing in him alone we have a due representation of God as he is love; which is the most joyful sight of God that any creature can obtain. He who beholds not the glory of Christ herein is utterly ignorant of those heavenly mysteries;—he knoweth neither God nor Christ,—he hath neither the Father nor the Son. He knows not God, because he knows not the holy properties of his nature in the principal way designed by infinite wisdom for their manifestation; he knows not

Christ, because he sees not the glory of God in him. Wherefore, whatever notions men may have from the light of nature, or from the works of Providence, that there is love in God,—however they may adorn them in elegant, affecting expressions,—yet from them no man can know that "God is love." In the revelation hereof Christ hath the pre-eminence; nor can any man comprehend anything of it aright but in him. It is that which the whole light of the creation cannot discover; for it is the spring and centre of the mystery of godliness.

These things are of the deep things of God, such as belong unto that wisdom of God in a mystery which they that are carnal cannot receive, as the apostle testifies, 1 Cor. ii. 14. But the meanest believer who lives in the exercise of faith, may have an understanding of them so far as is needful unto his love and obedience. The sum of the whole is this: If you would behold the glory of Christ as the great means of your sanctification and consolation, as the only preparation for the beholding of his glory in eternal blessedness, consider what of God is made known and represented unto you in him, wherein God purposed and designed to glorify himself in him. Now, this is all that may be known of God in a saving manner,—especially his wisdom, his love, his goodness, grace, and mercy, whereon the life of our souls doth depend;—and the Lord Christ being appointed the only way and means hereof, how exceeding glorious must he be in the eyes of them that do believe!

These things being premised, I shall close this first consideration of that glory of Christ which we behold by faith in this world, with some such observations as may excite us unto the practice of this great duty, and improvement of this great privilege,—the greatest which on this side heaven we can be made partakers of.

There are some who regard not these things at all, but rather despise them. They never entertain any serious thoughts of obtaining a view of the glory of God in Christ,—which is to be unbelievers. They look on him as a teacher that came forth from God to reveal his will, and to teach us his worship; and so indeed he was. But this they say was the sole use of his person in religion,—which is Mohammedanism. The manifestation of all the holy properties of the divine nature, with the representation of them unto angels above and the church in this world, as he is the image of the invisible God, in the constitution of his person and the discharge of his office, are things they regard not; yea, they despise and scorn what is professed concerning them: for pride and contempt of others were always the safest covert of ignorance; otherwise it would seem strange that men should openly boast of their own blindness. But these conceptions of men's minds are influenced by that unbelief of his divine person which maketh havoc of Christianity at this day in the world.

I speak of them whose minds are better disposed towards heavenly things; and unto them I say, Wherefore do you love Jesus Christ? for so you profess to do. Wherefore do you trust in him? wherefore do you honour him? wherefore do you desire to be in heaven with him? Can you give a *reason of this hope* that is in you,—an account why you do all or any of these things? If you cannot, all that you pretend towards him is but fancy and imagination; you fight uncertainly, as men beating the air. Or is one of your reasons hereof, that in him you do by faith behold that glory of God, with the holy properties of his nature, and their principal operations, in order unto your own salvation and blessedness, which otherwise would have been eternally hid from you? Herein is he "precious unto them that do believe."

Let us, therefore, as many as are spiritual, be thus minded. Let us make use of this *privilege* with rejoicing, and be found in the discharge of this *duty* with diligence. For thus to behold the glory of Christ is both our privilege and our duty. The duties of the Law were a burden and a yoke; but those of the Gospel are privileges and advantages.

It is a promise concerning the days of the New Testament, that our "eyes shall see the King in his beauty," Isa. xxxiii. 17. We shall behold the glory of Christ in its lustre and excellency. What is this beauty of the King of saints? Is it not that God is in him, and he is the great representative of his glory unto us? Wherefore, in the contemplation of this glory consists the principal exercise of faith. And who can declare the glory of this privilege, that we who are born in darkness, and deserved to be cast out into utter darkness, should be translated into this marvellous "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?"

What are all the stained glories, the fading beauties of this world? of all that the devil showed our Saviour from the mount? what are they in comparison of one view of the glory of God represented in Christ, and of the glory of Christ as his great representative?

The most pernicious effect of unbelief under the preaching of the gospel is, that, together with an influence of power from Satan, "it blinds the eyes of men's minds, that they should not see this glory of Christ;" whereon they perish eternally, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But the most of those who at this day are called Christians are strangers unto this duty. Our Lord Jesus Christ told the Pharisees, that notwithstanding all their boasting of the knowledge of God, they had not "heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape;" that is, as Moses did. They had no real acquaintance with him,—they had no spiritual view of his glory. And so it is amongst ourselves; notwithstanding the general profession that is of the knowledge of Christ,

they are but few who thus behold his glory; and therefore few who are transformed into his image and likeness.

Some men speak much of the *imitation* of Christ, and following of his example; and it were well if we could see more of it really in effect. But no man shall ever become "like unto him" by bare imitation of his actions, without that view or intuition of his glory which alone is accompanied with a transforming power to change them into the same image.

The truth is, the best of us all are wofully defective in this duty, and many are discouraged from it because a pretence of it in some hath degenerated into superstition; but we are loath at any time seriously to engage in it, and come with an unwilling kind of willingness unto the exercise of our minds in it.

Thoughts of this glory of Christ are too high for us, or too hard for us, such as we cannot long delight in; we turn away from them with a kind of weariness: yet are they of the same nature in general with our beholding of the glory of Christ in heaven, wherein there shall be no weariness, or satiety, unto eternity. Is not the cause of it, that we are unspiritual or carnal, having our thoughts and affections wonted to give entertainment unto other things? For this is the principal cause of our unreadiness and incapacity to exercise our minds in and about the great mysteries of the Gospel, 1 Cor. iii. 1–3. And it is so with us, moreover, because we do not stir up ourselves with watchfulness and diligence in continual actings of faith on this blessed object. This is that which keeps many of us at so low an ebb, as unto the powers of a heavenly life and spiritual joys.

Did we abound in this duty, in this exercise of faith, our life in walking before God would be more sweet and pleasant unto us,—our spiritual light and strength would have a daily increase;—we should more represent the glory of Christ in our ways and walking than usually we do, and death itself would be most welcome unto us.

The angels themselves desire to look into the things of the glory of Christ, 1 Peter i. 12. There is in them matter of inquiry and instruction for the most high and holy spirits in heaven. The manifold wisdom of God in them is made known unto "principalities and powers in heavenly places by the church," Eph. iii. 10. And shall we neglect that which is the object of angelical diligence to inquire into; especially considering that we are more than they concerned in it?

Is Christ, then, thus glorious in our eyes? Do we see the Father in him, or by seeing of him? Do we sedulously daily contemplate on the wisdom, love, grace, goodness, holiness, and righteousness of God, as revealing and manifesting themselves in him? Do we sufficiently consider that the immediate vision of this glory in heaven will

be our everlasting blessedness? Doth the imperfect view which we have of it here increase our desires after the perfect sight of it above? With respect unto these inquiries I shall briefly speak unto sundry sorts of men.

Some will say they understand not these things, nor any concernment of their own in them. If they are true, yet are they notions which they may safely be without the knowledge of; for, so far as they can discern, they have no influence on Christian practice, or duties of morality; and the preaching of them doth but take off the minds of men from more necessary duties. But "if the gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that perish." And unto the objection I say,—

1. Nothing is more fully and clearly revealed in the Gospel, than that unto us Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God;" that he is the character of the person of the Father, so as that in seeing him we see the Father also; that we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face alone," as hath been proved. This is the principal fundamental mystery and truth of the Gospel; and which if it be not received, believed, owned, all other truths are useless unto our souls. To refer all the testimonies that are given hereunto to the doctrine which he taught, in contradistinction unto his person as acting in the discharge of his office, is anti-evangelical, anti-christian,—turning the whole Gospel into a fable.

2. It is so, that the light of faith is given unto us principally to enable us to behold the glory of God in Christ,—to contemplate on it, as unto all the ends of its manifestation. So is it expressly affirmed, 2 Cor. iv. 6. If we have not this light, as it is communicated by the power of God unto them that do believe, Eph. i. 17–19, we must be strangers unto the whole mystery of the Gospel, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

3. That in the beholding of the glory of God in Christ, we behold his glory also. For herein is he infinitely glorious above the whole creation, in that in and by him alone the glory of the invisible God is represented unto us. Herein do our souls live. This is that whereby the image of God is renewed in us, and we are made like unto the first-born.

4. This is so far from being unnecessary unto Christian practice, and the sanctified duties of morality, that he knows not Christ, he knows not the Gospel, he knows not the faith of the catholic church, who imagines that they can be performed acceptably without it. Yea, this is the root whence all other Christian duties do spring, and whereon they grow, whereby they are distinguished from the works of heathens. He is no Christian who believes not that faith in the person of Christ is the spring of all evangelical obedience; or who knows not that faith respects the revelation of the glory of God in him.

If these things are so, as they are the most important truths of the

Gospel, and whose denial overthrows the foundation of faith, and is ruinous to Christian religion, certainly it is our duty to live in the constant exercise of faith with respect unto this glory of Christ. And we have sufficient experience of what kind of morality the ignorance of it hath produced.

Others there are who may be some way strangers, but are no way enemies, unto this mystery, and to the practical exercise of faith therein. To such I shall tender the ensuing directions:—

1. Reckon in your minds, that this beholding of the glory of Christ by beholding the glory of God, and all his holy properties in him, is the greatest *privilege* whereof in this life we can be made partakers. The dawning of heaven is in it, and the first-fruits of glory; for this is life eternal, to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, John xvii. 3. Unless you value it, unless you esteem it as such a privilege, you will not enjoy it; and that which is not valued according unto its worth is despised. It is not enough to think it a privilege, an advantage; but it is to be valued above other things, according unto its greatness and excellency. "Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears," Job xxviii. 22. And if we do no more, we shall die strangers unto it; we are to "cry after this knowledge, and lift up our voice for this understanding," if we design to attain it.

2. As it is a great privilege, which requires a due valuation; so it is a great *mystery*, which requires much spiritual wisdom to the right understanding of it, and to direct in its practice, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Flesh and blood will not reveal it unto us, but we must be taught of God to apprehend it, John i. 12, 13; Matt. xvi. 16, 17. Mere unsanctified reason will never enable us unto, nor guide us in, the discovery of this duty. Men are not so vain as to hope for skill and understanding in the mystery of a secular art or trade, without the diligent use of those means whereby it may be attained; and shall we suppose that we may be furnished with spiritual skill and wisdom in this sacred mystery, without diligence in the use of the means appointed of God for the attaining of it? The principal of them is *fervent prayer*. Pray, then, with Moses, that God would show you this his glory; pray with the apostle, that "the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened to behold it;" pray that the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Fill your minds with spiritual thoughts and contrivances about them. Slothful and lazy souls never obtain one view of this glory; the "lion in the way" deters them from attempting it. Being carnal, they abhor all diligence in the use of spiritual means, such as prayer and meditation on things unto them uneasy, unpleasing, and difficult. Unto others the way partakes of

the nature of the end; the means of obtaining a view of the glory of Christ are of the same kind, of the same pleasantness, with that view itself in their proportion.

3. Learn the use hereof from the actings of *contrary vicious habits.* When the minds of men are vehemently fixed on the pursuit of their lusts, they will be continually ruminating on the objects of them, and have a thousand contrivances about them, until their "eyes become full of adulteries, and they cannot cease from sinning," as the apostle speaks. The objects of their lusts have framed and raised an image of themselves in their minds, and transformed them into their own likeness. Is this the way of them who "go down to the chambers of death?" Do they thus frame their souls, and make them meet for destruction, until their words, gestures, actions, proclaim the frame of their minds unto all that look upon them? And shall we be slothful and negligent in the contemplation of that glory which transforms our minds into its own likeness, so as that the eyes of our understandings shall be continually filled with it, until we see him and behold him continually, so as never to cease from the holy acts of delight in him and love to him?

4. Would we, then, behold the glory of God as he manifesteth it in and by the holy properties of his nature, with their blessed operations and effects?—without which we have nothing of the power of religion in us, whatever we pretend: this alone is the way of it. Go to the whole creation, and all things contained in it; they can say no more, but, "We have heard the fame and report of these things," and what we have heard we declare; but it is but a little portion of them that we are acquainted withal. "The heavens," indeed, "declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work." "The invisible things of God are understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." But, comparatively, it is but little that we can hence learn of these things, as to that we may behold of them in Christ Jesus. How blind herein was the best philosopher in comparison of the meanest of the apostles; yea, of him who is least in the kingdom of heaven!

But herein it is required that we rest not in the notion of this truth, and a bare assent unto the doctrine of it. The affecting power of it upon our hearts is that which we should aim at. Wherein doth the blessedness of the saints above consist? Is it not herein, that they behold and see the glory of God in Christ? And what is the effect of it upon those blessed souls? Doth it not change them into the same image, or make them like unto Christ? Doth it not fill and satiate them with joy, rest, delight, complacency, and ineffable satisfaction? Do we expect, do we desire, the same state of blessedness? It is our present view of the glory of Christ which is our initiation

thereinto, if we are exercised in it, until we have an experience of its transforming power in our souls.

These things are, it may be, of little use unto some. Such as are babes in spiritual knowledge and understanding,—either because they are carnal, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, or slothful in hearing, Heb. v. 12–14,—are not capable of these divine mysteries. And therefore the apostle did, in an especial manner, declare this wisdom of God in a mystery unto them that were perfect, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7;—that is, who were more grown in spiritual knowledge, and had their "senses exercised to discern good and evil." It is unto them who are exercised in the contemplation of invisible things, who delight to walk in the more retired paths of faith and love, that they are precious.

Some few inferences from the whole of what hath been declared shall put a close to this part of our Discourse.

1. The holy properties of the divine nature are not only represented unto our faith in Christ, as to their own essential glory, but as they are in the *exercise of their powers* for the salvation of the church. In him do we behold the wisdom, goodness, love, grace, mercy, and power of God, acting themselves in the contrivance, constitution, and efficacious accomplishment of the great work of our redemption and salvation. This gives, as unto us, an unutterable lustre unto the native amiableness of the divine excellencies. The wisdom and love of God are in themselves infinitely glorious,—infinitely amiable;—nothing can be added unto them,—there can be no increase of their essential glory. Howbeit, as they are eternally resident in the divine nature, and absolutely the same with it, we cannot so comprehend them as to have an endearing, satiating view of their glory, but as they are exerted in the work of the redemption and salvation of the church,—as they are expressed, communicating their blessed effects unto the souls of them that do believe,—which is done only in Christ; so the beams of their glory shine unto us with unspeakable refreshment and joy, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Hence the apostle, on the consideration of the actings of the holy properties of God in this blessed work, falls into that contemplation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen," Rom. xi. 33–36.

2. *In and through Christ we do believe in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21. This is the life of our souls. God himself, in the infinite perfections of his divine nature, is the ultimate object of our faith. But he is not here the immediate object of it; but the divine way and means of the

manifestation of himself and them unto us, are so. Through Christ we believe in God. By our belief in him we come to place our faith ultimately in God himself; and this we can no otherwise do but by beholding the glory of God in him, as hath been declared.

3. This is the only way whereby we may attain the *saving, sanctifying knowledge of God.* Without this, every beam of divine light that shines on us, or gleams from without (as the light shineth into darkness when the darkness comprehendeth it not, John i. 5), every spark that ariseth from the remainders of the light of nature within, doth rather amaze the minds of men than lead them into the saving knowledge of God. So a glance of light in a dark night, giving a transient view of various objects, and passing away, doth rather amaze than direct a traveller, and leave him more exposed unto wandering than before. Such were all those notions of the Divine Being and his excellencies, which those who boasted themselves to be wise among the heathen embraced and improved. They did but fluctuate in their minds; they did not transform them into the image and likeness of God, as the saving knowledge of him doth, Col. iii. 10.

So the apostle expresseth this truth, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 20–24.

After it was evident unto all, that the world, the wise, the studious, the contemplative part of it, in the wisdom of God, disposing them into that condition wherein they were left unto themselves, in their own wisdom, their natural light and reason, did not, could not, come to the saving knowledge of God, but were puffed up into a contempt of the only way of the revelation of himself as weakness and folly;—it pleased God then to manifest all their wisdom to be folly, and to establish the only means of the knowledge of himself in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER III.

The Glory of Christ in the mysterious Constitution of his Person.

The second thing wherein we may behold the glory of Christ, given him of his Father, is in the mysterious constitution of his Person, as

he is God and man in one and the same person. There are in him, in his one single individual person, two distinct natures; the one, eternal, infinite, immense, almighty,—the form and essence of God; the other, having a beginning in time, finite, limited, confined unto a certain place,—which is our nature, which he took on him when he was "made flesh, and dwelt among us." The declaration of the nature of this glory is a part of my discourse of the Person of Christ, whereunto I refer the reader:—my present design is of another nature.

This is that glory whose beams are so illustrious, as that the blind world cannot bear the light and beauty of them. Multitudes begin openly to deny this incarnation of the Son of God,—this personal union of God and man in their distinct natures. They deny that there is either glory or truth in it; and it will ere long appear (it begins already to evidence itself) what greater multitudes there are, who yet do not, who yet dare not, openly reject the doctrine of it, who in truth believe it not, nor see any glory in it. Howbeit, this glory is the glory of our religion,—the glory of the church,—the sole Rock whereon it is built,—the only spring of present grace and future glory.

This is that glory which the angels themselves desire to behold, the mystery whereof they "bow down to look into," 1 Peter i. 12. So was their desire represented by the cherubim in the most holy place of the tabernacle; for they were a shadow of the ministry of angels in the church. The ark and the mercy-seat were a type of Christ in the discharge of his office; and these cherubim were made standing over them, as being in heaven above; but earnestly looking down upon them in a posture of reverence and adoration. So they did of old; and in their present contemplation of it consists no small part of their eternal blessedness.

Hereon depends the ruin of Satan and his kingdom. His sin, so far as we can conceive, consisted of two parts. 1. His pride against the person of the Son of God, by whom he was created. "For by him were all things created that are" (or were when first created) "in heaven, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," Col. i. 16. Against him he lifted up himself;—which was the beginning of his transgression. 2. Envy against mankind, made in the image of God, of the Son of God the first-born. This completed his sin; nothing was now left whereon to act his pride and malice. Unto his eternal confusion and ruin, God, in infinite wisdom, unites both the natures he had sinned against in the one person of the Son; who was the first object of his pride and malice. Hereby his destruction is attended with everlasting shame in the discovery of his folly, wherein he would have contended with infinite wisdom, as well as misery, by the powers of the two natures united in one person.

Here lies the *foundation* of the church. The foundation of the whole old creation was laid in an act of absolute sovereign power. Hereby God "hanged the earth upon nothing." But the foundation of the church is on this mysterious, immovable rock, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;"—on the most intimate conjunction of the two natures, the divine and human, in themselves infinitely distant, in the same person.

We may name one place wherein it is gloriously represented unto us, Isa. ix. 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Here must the whole church fall down and worship the Author of this wonderful contrivance; and, captivating their understandings unto the obedience of faith, humbly adore what they cannot comprehend.

This was obscurely represented unto the church of old, Exod. iii. 2–6, "And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham," &c.

This fire was a type or declaration of the presence of God in the person of the Son. For with respect unto the Father he is called an Angel, the Angel of the covenant; but absolutely in himself, he was Jehovah, the "God of Abraham," &c. And of his presence the fire was a proper representation. For in his nature he is as a "consuming fire;" and his present work was the delivery of the church out of a fiery trial. This fire placed itself in a bush, where it burned; but the bush was not consumed. And although the continuance of the fire in the bush was but for a short season, a present appearance, yet thence was God said to dwell in the bush: "The good-will of him that dwelt in the bush," Deut. xxxiii. 16. And this is so spoken, because the being of the fire in the bush for a season was a type of him in whom "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily," and that for ever, Col. ii. 9,—of him who was "made flesh, and dwelt among us," John i. 14. The eternal fire of the divine nature dwells in the bush of our frail nature, yet is it not consumed thereby. God thus dwells in this bush, with all his good-will towards sinners.

Moses looked on this sight as a marvellous and wondrous thing.

And if it were so in the type, what is it in the truth, substance, and reality of it?

And by direction given unto him to "put off his shoes," we are taught to cast away all fleshly imaginations and carnal affections, that by pure acts of faith we may behold this glory,—the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.

I design not here to insist on the explication or confirmation of this glorious truth, concerning the constitution of the person of Christ in and by his incarnation. What I can comprehend, what I do believe concerning it, I have fully declared in a large peculiar treatise.[1] Here I take the truth itself as known, or as it may be thence learned. My present business is only to stir up the minds of believers unto a due contemplation of the glory of Christ in the sacred, mysterious constitution of his person, as God and man in one. So much as we abide herein, so much do "we live by the faith of the Son of God;"—and God can, by a spirit of wisdom and revelation, open the eyes of our understandings, that we may behold this glory unto our ineffable consolation and joy. And unto the diligent discharge of our duty herein I shall offer the ensuing directions:—

1. Let us get it fixed on our souls and in our minds, that this glory of Christ in the divine constitution of his person is the best, the most noble, useful, beneficial object that we can be conversant about in our thoughts, or cleave unto in our affections.

What are all other things in comparison of the "knowledge of Christ?" In the judgment of the great apostle, they are but "loss and dung," Phil. iii. 8–10. So they were to him; and if they are not so to us we are carnal.

What is the world, and what are the things thereof, which most men spend their thoughts about, and fix their affections on? The Psalmist gives his judgment about them, in comparison of a view of this glory of Christ, Ps. iv. 6, "Many say, Who will show us any good?"—Who will give and help us to attain so much in and of this world as will give rest and satisfaction unto our minds? That is the good inquired after. But, saith he, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." The light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus is that satisfactory good alone which I desire and seek after.

The Scripture reproacheth the vanity and folly of the minds of men, in that "they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which profiteth not." They engage the vigour of their spirits about perishing things, when they have durable substance and riches proposed unto them.

[1] See the preceding treatise, "Christologia; or, a Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ."

How do men for the most part exercise their minds? what are they conversant about in their thoughts?

Some by them "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" as Rom. xiii. 14. They search about continually in their thoughts for objects suited unto their lusts and carnal affections, coining, framing, and stamping of them in their imaginations. They fix their eyes with delight on toads and serpents, with all noisome, filthy objects,—refusing, in the meantime, to behold the beauty and glory of the light of the sun. So is it with all that spend their thoughts about the objects of their sinful pleasures,—refusing to look up after one view of this glory of Christ.

Some keep their thoughts in continual exercise about the things of this world, as unto the advantages and emoluments which they expect from them. Hereby are they transformed into the image of the world, becoming earthly, carnal, and vain. Is it because there is no God in Israel that these applications are made unto the idol of Ekron? that there is no glory, no desirableness in Christ for men to inquire after, and fix their minds upon? O the blindness, the darkness, the folly of poor sinners! *Whom* do they despise? and for *what?*

Some, of more refined parts and notional minds, do arise unto a sedulous meditation on the works of creation and providence. Hence many excellent discourses on that subject, adorned with eloquence, are published among us. And a work this is worthy of our nature, and suited unto our rational capacities; yea, the first end of our natural endowment with them. But in all these things, there is no glory in comparison of what is proposed to us in the mysterious constitution of the person of Christ. The sun hath no glory, the moon and stars no beauty, the order and influence of the heavenly bodies have no excellency, in comparison of it.

This is that which the Psalmist designs to declare, Ps. viii., "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

He is engaged in a contemplation of the glory of God in his works; and he concludes that the fabric of heaven, with the moon and stars therein (for it was his meditation by night, when he beheld them), was exceeding glorious, and greatly to be admired. This casts his thoughts on the poor, weak, infirm nature of man, which seems as nothing in comparison of those glories above; but immediately hereon

he falls into an admiration of the wisdom, goodness, and love of God, exalting that nature incomparably above all the works of creation in the person of Jesus Christ; as the apostle expounds this place, Heb. ii. 5, 6.

This, therefore, is the highest, the best, the most useful object of our thoughts and affections. He who hath had a real view of this glory, though he know himself to be a poor, sinful, dying *worm* of the earth, yet would he not be an *angel* in heaven, if thereby he should lose the sight of it; for this is the centre wherein all the lines of the manifestation of the divine glory do meet and rest.

Look unto the things of this world,—wives, children, possessions, estates, power, friends, and honour; how amiable are they! how desirable unto the thoughts of the most of men! But he who hath obtained a view of the glory of Christ, will, in the midst of them all, say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee," Ps. lxxiii. 25; "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?" Ps. lxxxix. 6.

He himself, out of his infinite love and ineffable condescension, upon the sight and view of his church, and his own graces in her, wherewith she is adorned, doth say, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck," Cant. iv. 9. How much more ought a believing soul, upon a view of the glory of Christ, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, to say, Thou hast ravished my heart, taken it away from me! "O thou whom my soul loveth," one glance of thy glorious beauty upon me hath quite overcome me,—hath left no heart in me unto things here below! If it be not thus with us frequently,—if we value not this object of our minds and affections,—if we are not diligent in looking up unto him to behold his glory,—it is because we are carnal, and not in any good measure partakers of the promise, that "our eyes shall see the King in his beauty."

2. Our second direction unto the same end is, that we *diligently study the Scripture*, and the revelations that are made of this glory of Christ therein. To behold it, is not a work of fancy or imagination; it is not conversing with an image framed by the art of men without, or that of our own fancy within, but of faith exercised on divine revelations. This direction he gives us himself, John v. 39, "Search the Scriptures; for they are they which testify of me." The way whereby this is done is fully set before us in the example of the holy prophets under the Old Testament, 1 Peter i. 11–13.

This principle is always to be retained in our minds in reading of the Scripture,—namely, that the revelation and doctrine of the person

of Christ and his office, is the foundation whereon all other instructions of the prophets and apostles for the edification of the church are built, and whereinto they are resolved; as is declared, Eph. ii. 20–22. So our Lord Jesus Christ himself at large makes it manifest, Luke xxiv. 26, 27, 45, 46. Lay aside the consideration hereof, and the Scriptures are no such thing as they pretend unto,—namely, a revelation of the glory of God in the salvation of the church; nor are those of the Old Testament so at this day unto the Jews, who own not this principle, 2 Cor. iii. 13–16. There are, therefore, such revelations of the person and glory of Christ treasured up in the Scripture, from the beginning unto the end of it, as may exercise the faith and contemplation of believers in this world, and shall never, during this life, be fully discovered or understood; and in divine meditations of these revelations doth much of the life of faith consist.

There are three ways whereby the glory of Christ is represented unto us in the Scripture. First, By *direct descriptions* of his glorious person and incarnation. See, among other places, Gen. iii. 15; Ps. ii. 7–9, xlv. 2–6, lxviii. 17, 18, cx.; Isa.vi. 1–4, ix. 6; Zech. iii. 8; John i. 1–3; Phil. ii. 6–8; Heb. i. 1–3, ii. 14–16; Rev. i. 17, 18. Secondly, By *prophecies*, promises, and express instructions concerning him, all leading unto the contemplation of his glory, which are innumerable. Thirdly, By the *sacred institutions of divine worship* under the Old Testament: for the end of them all was to represent unto the church the glory of Christ in the discharge of his office; as we shall see afterward.

We may take notice of an instance in one kind under the Old Testament, and of one and another under the New.

His *personal appearances* under the Old Testament carried in them a demonstration of his glory. Such was that in the vision which Isaiah had, "when he saw his glory, and spake of him," chap. vi. 1, 2, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim," &c. It was a representation of the glory of the divine presence of Christ filling his human nature, the temple of his body, with a train of all-glorious graces. And if this typical representation of it was so glorious, as that the seraphim were not able steadfastly to behold it, but "covered their faces" upon its appearance, verse 2, how exceeding glorious is it in itself, as it is openly revealed in the Gospel!

Of the same nature are the immediate testimonies given unto him from heaven in the New Testament. So the apostle tells us, "he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," 2 Peter i. 17. The apostle intends the time of his transfiguration in the mount; for so he adds, verse 18, "And

this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Howbeit, at sundry other times he had the same testimony, or to the same purpose, from God, even the Father, in heaven. Herein God gave him honour and glory, which all those that believe in him should behold and admire; not only those who heard this testimony with their bodily ears, but all unto whom it is testified in the Scripture, are obliged to look after, and contemplate on, the glory of Christ, as thus revealed and proposed. From the throne of his excellency, by audible voices, by visible signs, by the opening of the heavens above, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, God testified unto him as his eternal Son, and gave him therein honour and glory. The thoughts of this divine testimony, and the glory of Christ therein, hath often filled the hearts of some with joy and delight.

This, therefore, in reading and studying the holy Scripture, we ought with all diligence to search and attend unto, as did the prophets of old (1 Peter i. 11, 12), if we intend by them to be made "wise unto salvation."

We should herein be as the merchant-man that seeks for pearls; he seeks for all sorts of them, but when he hath found one of "great price," he parts with all to make it his own, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. The Scripture is the field, the place, the mine where we search and dig for pearls. See Prov. ii. 1–5. Every sacred truth that is made effectual unto the good of our souls, is a pearl whereby we are enriched; but when we meet with, when we fall upon this pearl of price, the glory of Christ,—this is that which the soul of a believer cleaves unto with joy.

Then do we find food for souls in the word of truth, then do we taste how gracious the Lord is therein, then is the Scripture full of refreshment unto us as a spring of living water,—when we are taken into blessed views of the glory of Christ therein. And we are in the best frame of duty, when the principal motive in our minds to contend earnestly for retaining the possession of the Scripture against all that would deprive us of it, or discourage us from a daily diligent search into it, is this,—that they would take from us the only glass wherein we may behold the glory of Christ. This is the glory of the Scripture, that it is the great, yea, the only, outward means of representing unto us the glory of Christ; and he is the sun in the firmament of it, which only hath light in itself, and communicates it unto all other things besides.

3. Another direction unto this same end is, that having attained the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ from the Scripture, or by the dispensation of the truth in the preaching of the gospel, we *would esteem it our duty frequently to meditate thereon.*

Want hereof is that fundamental mistake which keeps many among us so low in their grace, so regardless of their privileges. They hear of these things, they assent unto their truth, at least they do not gainsay them; but they never solemnly meditate upon them. This they esteem a work that is above them, or are ignorant totally of it, or esteem themselves not much concerned in it, or dislike it as fanaticism. For it is that which no considerations can engage a carnal mind to delight in. The mind must be spiritual and holy, freed from earthly affections and encumbrances, raised above things here below, that can in a due manner meditate on the glory of Christ. Therefore are the most strangers unto this duty, because they will not be at the trouble and charge of that mortification of earthly affections,—that extirpation of sensual inclinations,—that retirement from the occasions of life, which are required thereunto. See the treatise on Spiritual-mindedness.

It is to be feared that there are some who profess religion with an appearance of strictness, who never separate themselves from all other occasions, to meditate on Christ and his glory; and yet, with a strange inconsistency of apprehensions, they will profess that they desire nothing more than to behold his glory in heaven for ever. But it is evident, even in the light of reason, that these things are irreconcilable. It is impossible that he who never meditates with delight on the glory of Christ here in this world, who labours not to behold it by faith as it is revealed in the Scripture, should ever have any real *gracious desire* to behold it in heaven. They may love and desire the fruition of their own imaginations;—they cannot do so of the glory of Christ, whereof they are ignorant, and wherewith they are unacquainted. It is, therefore, to be lamented that men can find time for, and have inclinations to think and meditate on, other things, it may be earthly and vain; but have neither heart, nor inclination, nor leisure, to meditate on this glorious object. What is the faith and love which such men profess? How will they find themselves deceived in the issue!

4. Let your *occasional thoughts of Christ be many,* and multiplied every day. He is not far from us; we may make a speedy address unto him at any time. So the apostle informs us, Rom. x. 6–8, "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)" For "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." The things that Christ did were done at a distance from us, and they are long since past. But, saith the apostle, "The word" of the Gospel wherein these things are revealed, and whereby an application is made of them unto our souls, is nigh unto us, even in our hearts; that is, if we are true

believers, and have mixed the word with faith ;—and so it exhibiteth Christ and all the benefits of his mediation unto us. If, therefore, this word is in our hearts, Christ is nigh unto us. If we turn at any time into ourselves to converse with the word that abideth in us, there we shall find him ready to receive us into communion with himself; that is, in the light of the knowledge of Christ which we have by the word, we may have sudden, occasional thoughts of him continually: and where our minds and affections are so filled with other things that we are not ready for converse with him who is thus nigh unto us by the word, we are spiritually indisposed.

So, to manifest how nigh he is unto us, it is said that "he stands at the door, and knocks," Rev. iii. 20, in the continual tender that he makes of himself and his grace unto our souls. For he is always accompanied with the glorious train of his graces; and if they are not received, he himself is not so. It is to no purpose to boast of Christ, if we have not an evidence of his graces in our hearts and lives. But unto whom he is the hope of future glory, unto them he is the life of present grace.

Sometimes it may be that He is withdrawn from us, so as that we cannot hear his voice, nor behold his countenance, nor obtain any sense of his love, though we seek him with diligence. In this state, all our thoughts and meditations concerning him will be barren and fruitless, bringing in no spiritual refreshment into our souls. And if we learn to be content with such lifeless, unaffecting thoughts of him as bring in no experience of his love, nor give us a real view of the glory of his person, we shall wither away as unto all the power of religion.

What is our duty in this case is so fully expressed by the spouse in the Canticles, as represents it plainly unto the minds of believers, who have any experience of these things, chap. iii. 1–4, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." The like account she gives of herself, and of her behaviour on the like occasion, chap. v. 2–8.

This is the substance of what by this example we are instructed unto. The Lord Christ is pleased sometimes to withdraw himself from the spiritual experience of believers; as to any refreshing sense of his love, or the fresh communications of consolatory graces. Those who never had experience of any such thing, who never had any re-

freshing communion with him, cannot be sensible of his absence;—they never were so of his presence. But those whom he hath visited,—to whom he hath given of his loves,—with whom he hath made his abode,—whom he hath refreshed, relieved, and comforted,—in whom he hath lived in the power of his grace,—they know what it is to be *forsaken* by him, though but *for a moment.* And their trouble is increased, when they seek him with diligence in the wonted ways of obtaining his presence, and cannot find him. Our duty, in this case, is to persevere in our inquiries after him, in prayer, meditation, mourning, reading and hearing of the Word, in all ordinances of divine worship, private and public, in diligent obedience,—until we find him, or he return unto us, as in former days.

It were well if all churches and professors now would manifest the same diligence herein as did the church of old in this example. Many of them, if they are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, cannot but be sensible that the Lord Christ is variously withdrawn from them, if ever they had experience of the power of his presence. Yet are the generality of them far from the frame of heart here described in the spouse; for they are slothful, careless, negligent, and stir not up themselves to inquire after him, or his return unto their souls. So was it with Laodicea of old, so was it with Sardis, and so it is to be feared that it is with many at present. But to return.

Generally, Christ is nigh unto believers, and of a ready access; and the principal actings of the life of faith consist in the frequency of our thoughts concerning him; for hereby Christ liveth in us, as he is said to do, Gal. ii. 20. This we cannot do, unless we have frequent thoughts of him and converse with him. It is often said among men, that one lives in another; this cannot be but where the affections of one are so engaged unto another, that night and day he thinks of him, and is thereby, as it were, present with him. So ought it to be between Christ and believers. He dwells in them by faith; but the actings of this life in them (as wherever life is, it will be in act and exercise) are proportionable unto their thoughts of him, and delight in him.

If, therefore, we would behold the glory of Christ, the present direction is, that on all occasions, and frequently when there are no occasions for it by the performance of other duties, we would abound in thoughts of him and his glory. I intend not at present fixed and stated meditations, which were spoken unto before; but such thoughts as are more transient, according as our opportunities are. And a great rebuke it ought to be unto us, when Christ hath at any time in a day been long out of our minds. The spouse affirms that, ere she was aware, her soul made her as the chariots of Ammi-nadib, Cant. vi. 12. It so fell out, that when she had no thoughts, no de-

sign or purpose, for attendance on communion with Christ, that she was surprised into a readiness and willingness unto it. So it will be with them that love him in sincerity. Their own souls, without previous designs or outward occasions, will frequently engage them in holy thoughts of him; which is the most eminent character of a truly spiritual Christian.

5. The next direction is, that all our thoughts concerning Christ and his glory should be accompanied with *admiration, adoration, and thanksgiving.* For this is such an object of our thoughts and affections as, in this life, we can never fully comprehend,—an ocean whose depths we cannot look into. If we are spiritually renewed, all the faculties of our souls are enabled by grace to exert their respective powers towards this glorious object. This must be done in various duties, by the exercise of various graces, as they are to be acted by the distinct powers of the faculties of our minds. This is that which is intended where we are commanded "to love the Lord with all our souls, with all our minds, with all our strength." All the distinct powers of our souls are to be acted by distinct graces and duties in cleaving unto God by love. In heaven, when we are come to our centre, that state of rest and blessedness which our nature is ultimately capable of, nothing but one infinite, invariable object of our minds and affections, received by vision, can render that state uninterrupted and unchangeable. But whilst we are here we know or see but in part, and we must also act our faith and love on part of that glory, which is not at once entirely proposed unto us, and which as yet we cannot comprehend. Wherefore we must act various graces in great variety about it;—some at one time, some at another, according unto the powers of all our renewed faculties. Of this sort are those mentioned of adoration, admiration, and thanksgiving; which are those acts of our minds wherein all others do issue when the object is incomprehensible. For unto them we are enabled by grace.

One end of his illustrious coming unto the judgment of the last day is, that he may be "admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. Even believers themselves shall be filled with an overwhelming admiration upon his glorious appearance. Or if the meaning be, not that he shall be admired by them, but admired in them, because of the mighty works of his grace and power in their redemption, sanctification, resurrection, and glory, it is to the same purpose,—he "comes to be admired." And, according to the prospect which we have of that glory ought our admiration to be.

And this admiration will issue in adoration and thanksgiving; whereof we have an eminent instance and example in the whole church of the redeemed, Rev. v. 9–14, "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof:

for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

The design of this Discourse is no more, but that when by faith we have attained a view of the glory of Christ, in our contemplations on his person, we should not pass it over as a notion of truth which we assent unto,—namely, that he is thus glorious in himself,—but endeavour to affect our hearts with it, as that wherein our own principal interest doth lie; wherein it will be effectual unto the transformation of our souls into his image.

But some, it may be, will say, at least I fear some may truly say, that these things do not belong unto them; they do not find that ever they had any benefit by them: they hope to be saved as well as others by the mediation of Christ; but as to this beholding of his glory by constant meditation and actings of faith therein, they know nothing of it, nor are concerned in it. The doctrine which they are taught out of the Scripture concerning the person of Christ, they give their assent unto; but his glory they hope they shall see in another world;—here they never yet inquired after it.

So it will be. It is well if these things be not only neglected, because the minds of men are carnal, and cannot discern spiritual things, but also despised, because they have an enmity unto them. It is not for all to walk in these retired paths;—not for them who are negligent and slothful, whose minds are earthly and carnal. Nor can they herein sit at the feet of Christ with Mary when she chose the better part, who, like Martha, are cumbered about many things here in this world. Those whose principal design is to add unto their present enjoyments (in the midst of the prosecution whereof they are commonly taken from them, so as that their thoughts do perish, because not accomplished) will never understand these things. Much less will they do so, whose work it is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof.

They must make it their design to be heavenly-minded who will find a relish in these things. Those who are strangers unto holy

meditation in general will be strangers unto this mystery in a peculiar manner.

Some men can think of the world, of their relations, and the manifold occasions of life; but as unto the things that are above, and within the veil, they are not concerned in them.

With some it is otherwise. They profess their desire to behold the glory of Christ by faith; but they find it, as they complain, too high and difficult for them. They are at a loss in their minds, and even overwhelmed, when they begin to view his glory. They are like the disciples who saw him in his transfiguration;—they were filled with amazement, and knew not what to say, or said they knew not what. And I do acknowledge, that the weakness of our minds in the comprehension of this eternal glory of Christ, and their instability in meditations thereon, whence we cannot steadfastly look on it or behold it, gives us an afflicting, abasing consideration of our present state and condition. And I shall say no more unto this case but this alone: When faith can no longer hold open the eyes of our understandings unto the beholding the Sun of Righteousness shining in his beauty, nor exercise orderly thoughts about this incomprehensible object, it will betake itself unto that holy admiration which we have spoken unto; and therein it will put itself forth in pure acts of love and complacency.

CHAPTER IV.

The Glory of Christ in his Susception of the Office of a Mediator—First in his Condescension.

The things whereof we have thus far discoursed, relating immediately unto the person of Christ in itself, may seem to have somewhat of difficulty in them unto such whose minds are not duly exercised in the contemplation of heavenly things. Unto others they are evident in their own experience, and instructive unto them that are willing to learn. That which remains will be yet more plain unto the understanding and capacity of the meanest believer. And this is, the glory of Christ in his office of Mediator, and the discharge thereof.

In our beholding of the glory of Christ herein doth the exercise of faith in this life principally consist; so the apostle declares it, Phil. iii. 8, 10, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." This, therefore, we must treat of somewhat more at large.

"There is one God," saith the apostle, "and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 5. In that great difference between God and man occasioned by our sin and apostasy from him, which of itself could issue in nothing but the utter ruin of the whole race of mankind, there was none in heaven or earth, in their original nature and operations, who was meet or able to make up a *righteous peace* between them. Yet must this be done by a mediator, or cease for ever.

This Mediator could not be God himself absolutely considered; for "a mediator is not of one, but God is one," Gal. iii. 20. Whatever God might do herein in a way of sovereign grace, yet he could not do it in the way of mediation; which yet was necessary unto his own glory, as we have at large discoursed elsewhere.

And as for creatures, there was none in heaven or earth that was meet to undertake this office. For "if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?" 1 Sam. ii. 25. There is not "any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both," Job ix. 33.

In this state of things the Lord Christ, as the Son of God, said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Sacrifice and burnt-offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; and, lo, I come to do thy will," Heb. x. 5, 9. By the assumption of our nature into union with himself, in his own divine person he became every way meet for the discharge of this office, and undertakes it accordingly.

That which we inquire after at present, is, the glory of Christ herein, and how we may behold that glory. And there are three things wherein we may take a prospect of it.

1. In his susception of this office.
2. In his discharge of it.
3. In the event and consequence thereof, or what ensued thereon.

In the susception of this office we may behold the glory of Christ,—I. In his *condescension;* II. In his *love.*

I. We may behold this glory in his *infinite condescension* to take this office on him, and our nature to be his own unto that end. It did not befall him by lot or chance;—it was not imposed on him against his will;—it belonged not unto him by any necessity of nature or condition, he stood not in need of it;—it was no addition unto him; but of his own mind and accord he graciously condescended unto the susception and discharge of it.

So the apostle expresseth it, Phil. ii. 5–8, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man,

he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It was the mind that was in Jesus Christ which is proposed unto our consideration and imitation,—what he was inclined and disposed unto from himself and his own mind alone. And that in general which is ascribed unto him is κένωσις, exinanition, or self-emptying; he emptied himself. This the ancient church called his συγκατάβασις, as we do his condescension; an act of which kind in God is called the "humbling of himself," Ps. cxiii. 6.

Wherefore, the susception of our nature for the discharge of the office of mediation therein was an infinite condescension in the Son of God, wherein he is exceedingly glorious in the eyes of believers.

And I shall do these three things:—1. Show in general the *greatness* of his condescension; 2. Declare the *especial nature* of it; and, 3. Take what view we are able of *the glory of Christ* therein.

1. Such is the transcendent excellency of the divine nature, that it is said of God that he "dwelleth on high," and "humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth," Ps. cxiii. 5, 6. He condescends from the prerogative of his excellency to behold, to look upon, to take notice of, the most glorious things in heaven above, and the greatest things in the earth below. All his respect unto the creatures, the most glorious of them, is an act of infinite condescension. And it is so on two accounts.

(1.) Because of the *infinite distance* that is between his essence, nature, or being, and that of the creatures. Hence all nations before him "are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance;" yea, that they "are as nothing, that they are counted unto him less than nothing, and vanity." All being is essentially in him, and in comparison thereunto all other things are as nothing. And there are no measures, there is no proportion between infinite being and nothing,—nothing that should induce a regard from the one unto the other. Wherefore, the infinite, essential greatness of the nature of God, with his infinite distance from the nature of all creatures thereby, causeth all his dealings with them to be in the way of condescension or humbling himself. So it is expressed, Isa. lvii. 15, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." He is so the high and lofty one, and so inhabiteth eternity, or existeth in his own eternal being, that it is an act of mere grace in him to take notice of things below; and therefore he doth it in an especial manner of those whom the world doth most despise.

(2.) It ariseth from his *infinite self-sufficiency* unto all the acts and

ends of his own eternal blessedness. What we have a regard unto, what we respect and desire, it is that it may add unto our satisfaction. So it is, so it must be, with every creature; no creature is self-sufficient unto its own blessedness. The human nature of Christ himself in heaven is not so; it lives in God, and God in it, in a full dependence on God, and in receiving blessed and glorious communications from him. No rational creature, angel or man, can do, think, act any thing, but it is all to add to their perfection and satisfaction;—they are not self-sufficient. God alone wants nothing, stands in need of nothing; nothing can be added unto him, seeing he "giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things," Acts xvii. 25. The whole creation, in all its excellency, cannot contribute one mite unto the satisfaction or blessedness of God. He hath it all in infinite perfection from himself and in his own nature. Our goodness extends not unto him. A man cannot profit God, as he may profit his neighbour. "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?" God loseth nothing of his own self-sufficiency and blessedness therein by all this. And "if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" Job xxxv. 6, 7. And from hence also it follows that all God's concernment in the creation is by an act of condescension.

How glorious, then, is the condescension of the Son of God in his susception of the office of mediation! For if such be the perfection of the divine nature, and its distance so absolutely infinite from the whole creation,—and if such be his self-sufficiency unto his own eternal blessedness, as that nothing can be taken from him, nothing added unto him, so that every regard in him unto any of the creatures is an act of self-humiliation and condescension from the prerogative of his being and state,—what heart can conceive, what tongue can express, the glory of that condescension in the Son of God, whereby he took our nature upon him, took it to be his own, in order unto a discharge of the office of mediation on our behalf?

2. But, that we may the better behold the glory of Christ herein, we may briefly consider the especial nature of this condescension, and wherein it doth consist.

But whereas not only the denial, but misapprehensions hereof, have pestered the church of God in all ages, we must, in the first place, reject them, and then declare the truth.

(1.) This condescension of the Son of God did not consist in a laying aside, or parting with, or *separation from*, the divine nature, so as that he should cease to be God by being man. The foundation of it lay in this, that he was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6;—that is, being really and essentially God in his divine nature, he professed himself therein to

be equal with God, or the person of the Father. He was in the form of God,—that is, he was God, participant of the divine nature, for God hath no form but that of his essence and being; and hence he was equal with God, in authority, dignity, and power. Because he was in the form of God, he must be equal with God; for there is *order* in the Divine Persons, but no *inequality* in the Divine Being. So the Jews understood him, that when he said, "God was his Father, he made himself equal with God." For in his so saying, he ascribed unto himself equal power with the Father, as unto all divine operations. "My Father," saith he, "worketh hitherto, and I work," John v. 17, 18. And they by whom his divine nature is denied do cast this condescension of Christ quite out of our religion, as that which hath no reality or substance in it. But we shall speak of them afterward.

Being in this state, it is said that he took on him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, Phil. ii. 7. This is his condescension. It is not said that he ceased to be in the form of God; but continuing so to be, he "took upon him the form of a servant" in our nature: he became what he was not, but he ceased not to be what he was. So he testifieth of himself, John iii. 13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven." Although he was then on earth as the Son of man, yet he ceased not to be God thereby;—in his divine nature he was then also in heaven.

He who is God, can no more be not God, than he who is not God can be God; and our difference with the Socinians herein is,—we believe that Christ being God, was made man for our sakes; they say, that being only a man, he was made a god for his own sake.

This, then, is the foundation of the glory of Christ in this condescension, the life and soul of all heavenly truth and mysteries,—namely, that the Son of God becoming in time to be what he was not, the Son of man, ceased not thereby to be what he was, even the eternal Son of God. Wherefore,—

(2.) Much less did this condescension consist in the *conversion of the divine nature into the human*,—which was the imagination of some of the Arians of old; and we have yet (to my own knowledge) some that follow them in the same dotage. They say that the "Word which was in the beginning," by which all things were made, being in itself an effect of the divine will and power, was in the fulness of time turned into flesh;—that is, the substance of it was so, as the water in the miracle wrought by our Saviour was turned into wine; for, by an act of the divine power of Christ, it ceased to be water substantially, and was wine only,—not water mixed with wine. So these men suppose a substantial change of the one nature into the

other,—of the divine nature into the human,—like what the Papists imagine in their transubstantiation. So they say God was made man, his essence being turned into that of a man.

But this no way belongs unto the condescension of Christ. We may call it Ichabod,—it hath no glory in it. It destroys both his natures, and leaves him a person in whom we are not concerned. For, according unto this imagination, that divine nature, wherein he was in the form of God, did in its own form cease to be, yea, was utterly destroyed, as being substantially changed into the nature of man, as the water did cease to be when it was turned into wine; and that human nature which was made thereof hath no alliance or kindred unto us or our nature, seeing it was not "made of a woman," but of the substance of the Word.

(3.) There was not in this condescension the least *change* or alteration in the divine nature. Eutyches and those that followed him of old conceived that the two natures of Christ, the divine and human, were mixed and compounded, as it were, into one. And this could not be without an alteration in the divine nature, for it would be made to be essentially what it was not;—for one nature hath but one and the same essence.

But, as we said before, although the Lord Christ himself in his person was made to be what he was not before, in that our nature hereby was made to be his, yet his divine nature was not so. There is in it neither "variableness nor shadow of turning." It abode the same in him, in all its essential properties, actings, and blessedness, as it was from eternity. It neither did, acted, nor suffered any thing but what is proper unto the Divine Being. The Lord Christ did and suffered many things in life and death, in his own person, by his human person, wherein the divine neither did nor suffered any thing at all,—although, in the doing of them, his person be denominated from that nature; so, "God purchased his church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28.

(4.) It may, then, be said, What did the Lord Christ, in this condescension, with respect unto his divine nature? The apostle tells us that he "humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation," Phil. ii. 7, 8. He veiled the glory of his divine nature in ours, and what he did therein, so as that there was no outward appearance or manifestation of it. The world hereon was so far from looking on him as the true God, that it believed him not to be a good man. Hence they could never bear the least intimation of his divine nature, supposing themselves secured from any such thing, because they looked on him with their eyes to be a man,—as he was, indeed, no less truly and really than any one of themselves. Wherefore, on that testimony given of himself, "Before Abraham was, I am,"—which asserts a pre-

existence from eternity in another nature than what they saw,—they were filled with rage, and "took up stones to cast at him," John viii. 58, 59. And they gave a reason of their madness, John x. 33,—namely, that "he, being a man, should make himself to be God." This was such a thing, they thought, as could never enter into the heart of a wise and sober man,—namely, that being so, owning himself to be such, he should yet say of himself that he was God. This is that which no reason can comprehend, which nothing in nature can parallel or illustrate, that one and the same person should be both God and man. And this is the principal plea of the Socinians at this day, who, through the Mohammedans, succeed unto the Jews in an opposition unto the divine nature of Christ.

But all this difficulty is solved by the glory of Christ in this condescension; for although in himself, or his own divine person, he was "over all, God blessed for ever," yet he humbled himself for the salvation of the church, unto the eternal glory of God, to take our nature upon him, and to be made man: and those who cannot see a divine glory in his so doing, do neither know him, nor love him, nor believe in him, nor do any way belong unto him.

So is it with the men of these abominations. Because they cannot behold the glory hereof, they deny the foundation of our religion,—namely, the divine person of Christ. Seeing he would be made man, he shall be esteemed by them no more than a man. So do they reject that glory of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, wherein he is more concerned than in the whole creation. And they dig up the root of all evangelical truths, which are nothing but branches from it.

It is true, and must be confessed, that herein it is that our Lord Jesus Christ is "a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence" unto the world. If we should confess him only as a prophet, a man sent by God, there would not be much contest about him, nor opposition unto him. The Mohammedans do all acknowledge it, and the Jews would not long deny it; for their hatred against him was, and is, solely because he professed himself to be God, and as such was believed on in the world. And at this day, partly through the insinuation of the Socinians, and partly from the efficacy of their own blindness and unbelief, multitudes are willing to grant him to be a prophet sent of God, who do not, who will not, who cannot, believe the mystery of this condescension in the susception of our nature, nor see the glory of it. But take this away, and all our religion is taken away with it. Farewell Christianity, as to the mystery, the glory, the truth, the efficacy of it;—let a refined heathenism be established in its room. But this is the rock on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

(5.) This condescension of Christ was not by a *phantasm* or an appearance only. One of the first heresies that pestered the church immediately after the days of the apostles was this, that all that was done or suffered by Christ as a man were not the acts, doings, or sufferings of one that was truly and really a man, but an outward representation of things, like the appearance of angels in the shape of men, eating and drinking, under the Old Testament; and suitably hereunto some in our days have spoken,—namely, that there was only an *appearance* of Christ in the man Jesus at Jerusalem, in whom he suffered no more than in other believers.[1] But the ancient Christians told those men the truth,—namely, that "as they had feigned unto themselves an imaginary Christ, so they should have an imaginary salvation only."

But the true nature of this divine condescension doth consist in these three things:—

1. That "*the eternal person of the Son of God, or the divine nature in the person of the Son, did, by an ineffable act of his divine power and love, assume our nature into an individual subsistence in or with himself; that is, to be his own, even as the divine nature is his.*" This is the infallible foundation of faith, even to them who can comprehend very little of these divine mysteries. They can and do believe that the Son of God did take our nature to be his own; so as that whatever was done therein was done by him, as it is with every other man. Every man hath human nature appropriated unto himself by an individual subsistence, whereby he becomes to be that man which he is, and not another; or that nature which is common unto all, becomes in him to be peculiarly his own, as if there were none partaker of it but himself. Adam, in his first creation, when all human nature was in him alone, was no more that individual man which he was, than every man is now the man that he is, by his individual subsistence. So the Lord Christ taking that nature which is common unto all into a peculiar subsistence in his own person, it becometh his, and he the man Christ Jesus. This was the mind that was in him.

2. By reason of this *assumption of our nature*, with his doing and suffering therein, whereby he was found in fashion as a man, the glory of his divine person was veiled, and he made himself of no reputation. This also belongs unto his condescension, as the first general effect and fruit of it. But we have spoken of it before.

3. It is also to be observed, that in *the assumption of our nature*

[1] The Docetæ, to whom Dr Owen refers, were a sect of the Asiatic Gnostics. The founder of the sect was Marcion, who was born in Pontus, near the beginning of the second century. He held that Christ was a manifestation of God under the *appearance* of man. The name was applied to some who, in the beginning of the sixth century, held that the body of Christ was not created, and therefore, that he only *appeared* to sleep, hunger, thirst, and suffer.—Ed.

to be his own, he did not change it into a thing divine and spiritual; but preserved it entire in all its essential properties and actings. Hence it really did and suffered, was tried, tempted, and forsaken, as the same nature in any other man might do and be. That nature (as it was peculiarly his, and therefore he, or his person therein) was exposed unto all the temporary evils which the same nature is subject unto in any other person.

This is a short general view of this incomprehensible condescension of the Son of God, as it is described by the apostle, Phil. ii. 5–8. And this is that wherein in an especial manner we are to behold the glory of Christ by faith whilst we are in this world.

But had we the tongue of men and angels, we were not able in any just measure to express the glory of this condescension; for it is the most ineffable effect of the divine wisdom of the Father and of the love of the Son,—the highest evidence of the care of God towards mankind. What can be equal unto it? what can be like it? It is the glory of Christian religion, and the animating soul of all evangelical truth. This carrieth the mystery of the wisdom of God above the reason or understanding of men and angels, to be the object of faith and admiration only. A mystery it is that becomes the greatness of God, with his infinite distance from the whole creation,—which renders it unbecoming him that all his ways and works should be comprehensible by any of his creatures, Job xi. 7–9; Rom. xi. 33–36.

He who was eternally in the form of God,—that is, was essentially so, God by nature, equally participant of the same divine nature with God the Father; "God over all, blessed for ever;" who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth,—he takes on him the nature of man, takes it to be his own, whereby he was no less truly a man in time than he was truly God from eternity. And to increase the wonder of this mystery, because it was necessary unto the end he designed, he so humbled himself in this assumption of our nature, as to make himself of no reputation in this world;—yea, unto that degree, that he said of himself that he was a worm, and no man, in comparison of them who were of any esteem.

We *speak* of these things in a poor, low, broken manner,—we *teach* them as they are revealed in the Scripture,—we labour by faith to adhere unto them as revealed; but when we come into a steady, direct view and consideration of the *thing itself,* our minds fail, our hearts tremble, and we can find no rest but in a holy admiration of what we cannot comprehend. Here we are at a loss, and know that we shall be so whilst we are in this world; but all the ineffable fruits and benefits of this truth are communicated unto them that do believe.

It is with reference hereunto that that great promise concerning him is given unto the church, Isa. viii. 14, "He shall be for a sanc-

tuary" (namely, unto all that believe, as it is expounded, 1 Peter ii. 7, 8); "but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence,"—"even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed."

He is herein a sanctuary, an assured refuge unto all that betake themselves unto him. What is it that any man in distress, who flies thereunto, may look for in a sanctuary? A supply of all his wants, a deliverance from all his fears, a defence against all his dangers, is proposed unto him therein. Such is the Lord Christ herein unto sin-distressed souls; he is a refuge unto us in all spiritual distresses and disconsolations, Heb. vi. 18. See the exposition of the place.[1] Are we, or any of us, burdened with a sense of sin? are we perplexed with temptations? are we bowed down under the oppression of any spiritual adversary? do we, on any of these accounts, "walk in darkness and have no light?" One view of the glory of Christ herein is able to support us and relieve us.

Unto whom we betake ourselves for relief in any case, we have regard to nothing but their will and their power. If they have both, we are sure of relief. And what shall we fear in the will of Christ as unto this end? What will he not do for us? He who thus emptied and humbled himself, who so infinitely condescended from the prerogative of his glory in his being and self-sufficiency, in the susception of our nature for the discharge of the office of a mediator on our behalf,—will he not relieve us in all our distresses? will he not do all for us we stand in need of, that we may be eternally saved? will he not be a sanctuary unto us? Nor have we hereon any ground to fear his power; for, by this infinite condescension to be a suffering man, he lost nothing of his power as God omnipotent,—nothing of his infinite wisdom or glorious grace. He could still do all that he could do as God from eternity. If there be any thing, therefore, in a coalescency of infinite power with infinite condescension, to constitute a sanctuary for distressed sinners, it is all in Christ Jesus. And if we see him not glorious herein, it is because there is no light of faith in us.

This, then, is the rest wherewith we may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshment. Herein is he "a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Hereon he says, "I have satiated the weary soul, and have refreshed every sorrowful soul." Under this consideration it is that, in all evangelical promises and invitations for coming to him, he is proposed unto distressed sinners as their only sanctuary.

Herein is he "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" unto

[1] In Dr Owen's work entitled, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

the unbelieving and disobedient, who stumble at the word. They cannot, they will not, see the glory of this condescension;—they neither desire nor labour so to do,—yea, they hate it and despise it. Christ in it is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" unto them. Wherefore they choose rather utterly to deny his divine person than allow that he did thus abase himself for our sakes. Rather than they will own this glory, they will allow him no glory. A man they say he was, and no more; and this was his glory. This is that principle of darkness and unbelief which works effectually at this day in the minds of many. They think it an absurd thing, as the Jews did of old, that he, being a man, should be God also; or, on the other hand, that the Son of God should thus condescend to take our nature on him. This they can see no glory in, no relief, no refuge, no refreshment unto their souls in any of their distresses; therefore do they deny his divine person. Here faith triumphs against them; it finds that to be a glorious sanctuary which they cannot at all discern.

But it is not so much the declaration or vindication of this glory of Christ which I am at present engaged in, as an exhortation unto the practical contemplation of it in a way of believing. And I know that among many this is too much neglected; yea, of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage, now drawing to their close, there is none so grievous as the public contempt of the principal mysteries of the Gospel among them that are called Christians. Religion, in the profession of some men, is withered in its vital principles, weakened in its nerves and sinews; but thought to be put off with outward gaiety and bravery.

But my exhortation is unto diligence in the contemplation of this glory of Christ, and the exercise of our thoughts about it. Unless we are diligent herein, it is impossible we should be steady in the principal *acts of faith*, or ready unto the principal *duties of obedience*. The principal act of faith respects the *divine person* of Christ, as all Christians must acknowledge. This we can never secure (as hath been declared) if we see not his glory in this condescension: and whoever reduceth his notions unto experience, will find that herein his faith stands or falls. And the principal duty of our obedience is *self-denial, with readiness for the cross*. Hereunto the consideration of this condescension of Christ is the principal evangelical motive, and that whereinto our obedience in it is to be resolved; as the apostle declares, Phil. ii. 5–8. And no man doth deny himself in a due manner, who doth it not on the consideration of the self-denial of the Son of God. But a prevalent motive this is thereunto. For what are the things wherein we are to deny ourselves, or forego what we pretend to have a right unto? It is in our goods, our liberties, our relations,—our lives. And what are they, any or all of them, in them-

selves, or unto us, considering our condition, and the end for which we were made? Perishing things, which, whether we will or no, within a few days death will give us an everlasting separation from, under the power of a fever or an asthma, &c., as unto our interest in them. But how incomparable with respect hereunto is that condescension of Christ, whereof we have given an account! If, therefore, we find an unwillingness in us, a tergiversation in our minds about these things, when called unto them in a way of duty, one view by faith of the glory of Christ in this condescension, and what he parted from therein when he "made himself of no reputation," will be an effectual cure of that sinful distemper.

Herein, then, I say, we may by faith behold the glory of Christ, as we shall do it by sight hereafter. If we see no glory in it, if we discern not that which is matter of eternal admiration, we walk in darkness. It is the most ineffable effect of divine wisdom and grace. Where are our hearts and minds, if we can see no glory in it? I know in the contemplation of it, it will quickly overwhelm our reason, and bring our understanding into a loss: but unto this *loss* do I desire to be brought every day; for when faith can no more act itself in comprehension, when it finds the object it is fixed on too great and glorious to be brought into our minds and capacities, it will issue (as we said before) in holy admiration, humble adoration, and joyful thanksgiving. In and by its actings in them doth it fill the soul with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

CHAPTER V.

The Glory of Christ in his Love.

In the susception and discharge of the mediatory office by the Son of God, the Scripture doth most eminently represent,—

II. His LOVE, as the sole impelling and leading cause thereof, Gal. ii. 20; 1 John iii. 16; Rev. i. 5.

Herein is he glorious, in a way and manner incomprehensible; for in the glory of divine love the chief brightness of glory doth consist. There is nothing of dread or terror accompanying it,—nothing but what is amiable and infinitely refreshing. Now, that we may take a view of the glory of Christ herein by faith, the nature of it must be inquired into.

1. The *eternal disposing cause* of the whole work wherein the Lord Christ was engaged by the susception of this office, for the redemption and salvation of the church, is the *love of the Father*. Hereunto it is constantly ascribed in the Scripture. And this love of the Father

acted itself in his eternal decrees, "before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4; and afterward in the sending of his Son to render it effectual, John iii. 16. Originally, it is his eternal election of a portion of mankind to be brought unto the enjoyment of himself, through the mystery of the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 16; Eph. i. 4–9; 1 Peter i. 2.

This eternal act of the will of God the Father doth not contain in it an actual approbation of, and complacency in, the state and condition of those that are elected; but only designeth that for them on the account whereof they shall be accepted and approved. And it is called his love on sundry accounts.

(1.) Because it is an act suited unto that glorious excellency of his nature wherein he is love; for "God is love," 1 John iv. 8, 9. And the first egress of the divine properties must, therefore, be in an act of communicative love. And whereas this election, being an eternal act of the will of God, can have no moving cause but what is in himself,—if we could look into all the treasures of the divine excellencies, we should find none whereunto it could be so properly ascribed as unto love. Wherefore,—

(2.) It is styled LOVE, because it was free and undeserved, as unto anything on our part; for whatever good is done unto any altogether undeserved, if it be with a design of their profit and advantage, it is an act of love, and can have no other cause. So is it with us in respect of eternal election. There was nothing in us, nothing foreseen, as that which, from ourselves, would be in us, that should any way move the will of God unto this election; for whatever is good in the best of men is an effect of it, Eph. i. 4. Whereas, therefore, it tends unto our eternal good, the spring of it must be love. And,—

(3.) The fruits or effects of it are inconceivable acts of love. It is by multiplied acts of love that it is made effectual; John iii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 3; Eph. i. 3–5; 1 John iv. 8, 9, 16.

2. This is the eternal spring which is derived unto the church through the mediation of Christ. Wherefore, that which put all the design of this eternal love of the Father into execution, and wrought out the accomplishment of it, was the *love of the Son*, which we inquire after; and light may be given unto it in the ensuing observations:—

(1.) The whole number or society of the elect were creatures made in the image of God, and thereby in a state of love with him. All that they were, had, or hoped for, were effects of divine goodness and love. And the *life* of their souls was *love unto God*. And a blessed state it was, preparatory for the eternal life of love in heaven.

(2.) From this state they *fell by sin* into a state of enmity with God; which is comprehensive of all miseries, temporal and eternal.

(3.) Notwithstanding this woful catastrophe of our first state, yet

our nature, on many accounts, was recoverable unto the enjoyment of God; as I have at large elsewhere declared.

(4.) In this condition, the *first act of love* in Christ towards us was in *pity* and compassion. A creature made in the image of God, and fallen into misery, yet capable of recovery, is the proper object of divine compassion. That which is so celebrated in the Scripture, as the bowels, the pity, the compassion of God, is the acting of divine love towards us on the consideration of our distress and misery. But all compassion ceaseth towards them whose condition is irrecoverable. Wherefore the Lord Christ pitied not the angels that fell, because their nature was not to be relieved. Of this compassion in Christ, see Heb. ii. 14–16; Isa. lxiii. 9.

(5.) As then we lay under the eye of Christ in our misery, we were the objects of his pity and compassion; but as he looketh on us as recoverable out of that state, his love worketh in and by *delight*. It was an inconceivable delight unto him, to take a prospect of the deliverance of mankind unto the glory of God; which is also an act of love. See this divinely expressed, Prov. viii. 30, 31, as that place hath been elsewhere explained.[1]

(6.) If it be inquired, whence this *compassion* and *delight* in him should arise, what should be the cause of them, that he who was eternally blessed in his own self-sufficiency should so deeply concern himself in our lost, forlorn condition? I say it did so merely from the infinite love and goodness of his own nature, without the least procuring inducement from us or any thing in us, Tit. iii. 5.

(7.) In this his readiness, willingness, and delight, springing from love and compassion, the *counsel* of God concerning the way of our recovery is, as it were, proposed unto him. Now, this was a way of great difficulties and perplexities unto himself,—that is, unto his person as it was to be constituted. To the divine nature nothing is grievous,—nothing is difficult; but he was to have another nature, wherein he was to undergo the difficulties of this way and work. It was required of him that he should pity us until he had none left to pity himself when he stood in need of it,—that he should pursue his delight to save us until his own soul was heavy and sorrowful unto death,—that he should relieve us in our sufferings by suffering the same things that we should have done. But he was not in the least hereby deterred from undertaking this work of love and mercy for us; yea, his love rose on this proposal like the waters of a mighty stream against opposition. For hereon he says, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;"—it is my delight to do it, Heb. x. 5–7; Isa. l. 5–7.

(8.) Being thus inclined, disposed, and ready, in the eternal love of his divine person, to undertake the office of mediation and the work

[1] See his "Christologia," &c., chap. iv., p. 54 of this volume.

of our redemption, a *body was prepared* for him. In this body or human nature, made his own, he was to make this love effectual in all its inclinations and actings. It was provided for him unto this end, and filled with all grace in a way unmeasurable, especially with fervent love unto mankind. And hereby it became a meet instrument to actuate his eternal love in all the fruits of it.

(9.) It is hence evident, that this glorious love of Christ doth not consist alone in the eternal actings of his divine person, or the divine nature in his person. Such, indeed, is the love of the Father,—namely, his eternal purpose for the communication of grace and glory, with his acquiescency therein; but there is more in the love of Christ. For when he exercised this love he was man also, and not God only. And in none of those eternal acts of love could the human nature of Christ have any interest or concern; yet is the love of the man Christ Jesus celebrated in the Scripture.

(10.) Wherefore this love of Christ which we inquire after is the *love of his person*,—that is, which he in his own person acts in and by his distinct natures, according unto their distinct essential properties. And the acts of love in these distinct natures are infinitely distinct and different; yet are they all acts of one and the same person. So, then, whether that act of love in Christ which we would at any time consider, be an eternal act of the divine nature in the person of the Son of God; or whether it be an act of the human, performed in time by the gracious faculties and powers of that nature, it is still the love of one and the selfsame person,—Christ Jesus.

It was an act of inexpressible love in him, that he assumed our nature, Heb. ii. 14, 17. But it was an act in and of his divine nature only; for it was antecedent unto the existence of his human nature, which could not, therefore, concur therein. His laying down his life for us was an act of inconceivable love, 1 John iii. 16. Yet was it only an act of the human nature, wherein he offered himself and died. But both the one and the other were acts of his divine person; whence it is said that God laid down his life for us, and purchased the church with his own blood.

This is that love of Christ wherein he is glorious, and wherein we are by faith to behold his glory. A great part of the blessedness of the saints in heaven, and their triumph therein, consists in their beholding of this glory of Christ,—in their thankful contemplation of the fruits of it. See Rev. v. 9, 10, &c.

The illustrious brightness wherewith this glory shines in heaven, the all-satisfying sweetness which the view of it gives unto the souls of the saints there possessed of glory, are not by us conceivable, nor to be expressed. Here, this love passeth knowledge,—there, we shall comprehend the dimensions of it. Yet even here, if we are not sloth-

ful and carnal, we may have a refreshing prospect of it; and where comprehension fails, let admiration take place.

My present business is, to exhort others unto the contemplation of it, though it be but a little, a very little, a small portion of it, that I can conceive; and less than that very little that I can express. Yet may it be my duty to excite not only myself, but others also, unto due inquiries after it; unto which end I offer the things ensuing.

1. *Labour that your minds may continually be fitted and prepared for such heavenly contemplations.* If they are carnal and sensual, or filled with earthly things, a due sense of this love of Christ and its glory will not abide in them. Virtue and vice, in their highest degrees, are not more diametrically opposite and inconsistent in the same mind, than are an habitual course of sensual, worldly thoughts and a due contemplation of the glory of the love of Christ; yea, an earnestness of spirit, pregnant with a multitude of thoughts about the lawful occasions of life, is obstructive of all due communion with the Lord Jesus Christ herein.

Few there are whose minds are prepared in a due manner for this duty. The actions and communications of the most evidence what is the inward frame of their souls. They rove up and down in their thoughts, which are continually led by their affections into the corners of the earth. It is in vain to call such persons unto contemplations of the glory of Christ in his love. A holy composure of mind, by virtue of spiritual principles, an inclination to seek after refreshment in heavenly things, and to bathe the soul in the fountain of them, with constant apprehensions of the excellency of this divine glory, are required hereunto.

2. Be not satisfied with *general notions* concerning the love of Christ, which represent no glory unto the mind, wherewith many deceive themselves. All who believe his divine person, profess a valuation of his love,—and think them not Christians who are otherwise minded; but they have only general notions, and not any distinct conceptions of it, and really know not what it is. To deliver us from this snare, peculiar meditations on its principal concerns are required of us. As,—

(1.) *Whose love it is,*—namely, of the divine person of the Son of God. He is expressly called God, with respect unto the exercise of this love, that we may always consider whose it is, 1 John iii. 16, "Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us."

(2.) By what *ways* and *means* this wonderful love of the Son of God doth act itself,—namely, in the divine nature, by eternal acts of wisdom, goodness, and grace proper thereunto; and in the human, by temporary acts of pity or compassion, with all the fruits of them in doing and suffering for us. See Eph. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. i. 5.

(3.) What is the *freedom* of it, as to any desert on our part, 1 John iv. 10. It was hatred, not love, that we in ourselves deserved; which is a consideration suited to fill the soul with self-abasement,—the best of frames in the contemplation of the glory of Christ.

(4.) What is the *efficacy* of it in its fruits and effects, with sundry other considerations of the like nature.

By a distinct prospect and admiration of these things, the soul may walk in this paradise of God, and gather here and there a heavenly flower, conveying unto it a sweet savour of this love of Christ. See Cant. ii. 2–4.

Moreover, be not contented to have right *notions* of the love of Christ in your minds, unless you can attain a gracious *taste* of it in your hearts; no more than you would be to see a feast or banquet richly prepared, and partake of nothing of it unto your refreshment. It is of that nature that we may have a spiritual sensation of it in our minds; whence it is compared by the spouse to apples and flagons of wine. We may taste that the Lord is gracious; and if we find not a relish of it in our hearts, we shall not long retain the notion of it in our minds. Christ is the meat, the bread, the food of our souls. Nothing is in him of a higher spiritual nourishment than his love, which we should always desire.

In this love is he *glorious;* for it is such as no creatures, angels or men, could have the least conceptions of, before its manifestation by its effects; and, after its manifestation, it is in this world absolutely incomprehensible.

CHAPTER VI.

The Glory of Christ in the Discharge of his Mediatory Office.

Secondly, As the Lord Christ was glorious in the susception of his office, so was he also in its *discharge.*

An unseen glory accompanied him in all that he did, in all that he suffered. Unseen it was unto the eyes of the world, but not in His who alone can judge of it. Had men seen it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Yet to some of them it was made manifest. Hence they testified that, in the discharge of his office, they "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father," John i. 14; and that when others could see neither "form nor comeliness in him that he should be desired," Isa. liii. 2. And so it is at this day. I shall only make some few observations; first, on what he did in a way of *obedience;* and then on what he *suffered* in the discharge of his office so undertaken by him.

I. 1. *What he did*, what obedience he yielded unto the law of God in the discharge of his office (with respect whereunto he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is in my heart"), it was all on his own free choice or election, and was resolved thereinto alone. It is our duty to endeavour after freedom, willingness, and cheerfulness in all our obedience. Obedience hath its formal nature from our wills. So much as there is of our wills in what we do towards God, so much there is of obedience, and no more. Howbeit we are, antecedently unto all acts of our own wills, obliged unto all that is called obedience. From the very constitution of our natures we are necessarily subject unto the law of God. All that is left unto us is a voluntary compliance with unavoidable commands; with him it was not so. An act of his own will and choice preceded all obligation as unto obedience. He obeyed because he would, before because he ought. He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," before he was obliged to do that will. By his own choice, and that in an act of infinite condescension and love, as we have showed, he was "made of a woman," and thereby "made under the law." In his divine person he was Lord of the law,—above it,—no more obnoxious unto its commands than its curse. Neither was he afterwards in himself, on his own account, unobnoxious unto its curse merely because he was innocent, but also because he was every way above the law itself, and all its force.

This was the original glory of his obedience. This wisdom, the grace, the love, the condescension that was in this choice, animated every act, every duty of his obedience,—rendering it amiable in the sight of God, and useful unto us. So, when he went to John to be baptized, he, who knew he had no need of it on his own account, would have declined the duty of administering that ordinance unto him; but he replied, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," Matt. iii. 15. This I have undertaken willingly, of my own accord, without any need of it for myself, and therefore will discharge it. For him, who was Lord of all universally, thus to submit himself to universal obedience, carrieth along with it an evidence of glorious grace.

2. This obedience, as unto the use and end of it, was not for himself, but *for us*. We were obliged unto it, and could not perform it; —he was not obliged unto it any otherwise but by a free act of his own will, and did perform it. God gave him this honour, that he should obey for the whole church,—that by "his obedience many should be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. Herein, I say, did God give him honour and glory, that his obedience should stand in the stead of the perfect obedience of the church as unto justification.

3. His obedience being absolutely *universal*, and absolutely *per-*

fect, was the great representative of the holiness of God in the law. It was represented glorious when the ten words were written by the finger of God in tables of stone; it appears yet more eminently in the spiritual transcription of it in the hearts of believers: but absolutely and perfectly it is exemplified only in the holiness and obedience of Christ, which answered it unto the utmost. And this is no small part of his glory in obedience, that the holiness of God in the law was therein, and therein alone, in that one instance, as unto human nature, fully represented.

4. He wrought out this obedience against all *difficulties* and *oppositions*. For although he was absolutely free from that disorder which in us hath invaded our whole natures, which internally renders all obedience difficult unto us, and perfect obedience impossible; yet as unto opposition from without, in temptations, sufferings, reproaches, contradictions, he met with more than we all. Hence is that glorious word, "Although he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered," Heb. v. 8. See our exposition of that place. But,—

5. The glory of this obedience ariseth principally from the consideration of the *person* who thus yielded it unto God. This was no other but the Son of God made man,—God and man in one person. He who was in heaven, above all, Lord of all, at the same time lived in the world in a condition of no reputation, and a course of the strictest obedience unto the whole law of God. He unto whom prayer was made, prayed himself night and day. He whom all the angels of heaven and all creatures worshipped, was continually conversant in all the duties of the worship of God. He who was over the house, diligently observed the meanest office of the house. He that made all men, in whose hand they are all as clay in the hand of the potter, observed amongst them the strictest rules of justice, in giving unto every one his due; and of charity, in giving good things that were not so due. This is that which renders the obedience of Christ in the discharge of his office both mysterious and glorious.

II. Again, the glory of Christ is proposed unto us in what he *suffered* in the discharge of the office which he had undertaken. There belonged, indeed, unto his office, victory, success, and triumph with great glory, Isa. lxiii. 1–5; but there were sufferings also required of him antecedently thereunto: "Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?"

But such were these sufferings of Christ, as that in our thoughts about them our minds quickly recoil in a sense of their insufficiency to conceive aright of them. Never any one launched into this ocean with his meditations, but he quickly found himself unable to fathom the depths of it; nor shall I here undertake an inquiry into them. I shall only point at this spring of glory, and leave it under a veil.

We might here look on him as under the weight of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; taking on himself, and on his whole soul, the utmost of evil that God had ever threatened to sin or sinners. We might look on him in his agony and bloody sweat, in his strong cries and supplications, when he was sorrowful unto the death, and began to be amazed, in apprehensions of the things that were coming on him,—of that dreadful trial which he was entering into. We might look upon him conflicting with all the powers of darkness, the rage and madness of men,—suffering in his soul, his body, his name, his reputation, his goods, his life; some of these sufferings being immediate from God above, others from devils and wicked men, acting according to the determinate counsel of God. We might look on him praying, weeping, crying out, bleeding, dying,—in all things making his soul an offering for sin; so was he "taken from prison, and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression," saith God, "of my people was he smitten," Isa. liii. 8. But these things I shall not insist on in particular, but leave them under such a veil as may give us a prospect into them, so far as to fill our souls with holy admiration.

Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Who hath known thy mind, or who hath been thy counsellor? O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! What shall we say unto these things? That God spared not his only Son, but gave him up unto death, and all the evils included therein, for such poor, lost sinners as we were;—that for our sakes the eternal Son of God should submit himself unto all the evils that our natures are obnoxious unto, and that our sins had deserved, that we might be delivered!

How glorious is the Lord Christ on this account, in the eyes of believers! When Adam had sinned, and thereby eternally, according unto the sanction of the law, ruined himself and all his posterity, he stood ashamed, afraid, trembling, as one ready to perish for ever, under the displeasure of God. Death was that which he had deserved, and immediate death was that which he looked for. In this state the Lord Christ in the promise comes unto him, and says, Poor creature! how woful is thy condition! how deformed is thy appearance! What is become of the beauty, of the glory of that image of God wherein thou wast created? how hast thou taken on thee the monstrous shape and image of Satan? And yet thy present misery, thy entrance into dust and darkness, is no way to be compared with what is to ensue. Eternal distress lies at the door. But yet look up once more, and behold me, that thou mayest have some glimpse of what is in the designs of infinite wisdom, love, and grace. Come forth from

thy vain shelter, thy hiding-place. I will put myself into thy condition. I will undergo and bear that burden of guilt and punishment which would sink thee eternally into the bottom of hell. I will pay that which I never took; and be made *temporally* a curse for thee, that thou mayest attain unto *eternal* blessedness. To the same purpose he speaks unto convinced sinners, in the invitation he gives them to come unto him.

Thus is the Lord Christ set forth in the Gospel, "evidently crucified" before our eyes, Gal. iii. 1,—namely, in the representation that is made of his glory,—in the sufferings he underwent for the discharge of the office he had undertaken. Let us, then, behold him as poor, despised, persecuted, reproached, reviled, hanged on a tree,—in all, labouring under a sense of the wrath of God due unto our sins. Unto this end are they recorded in the Gospel,—read, preached, and represented unto us. But what can we see herein?—what glory is in these things? Are not these the things which all the world of Jews and Gentiles stumbled and took offence at?—those wherein he was appointed to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence? Was it not esteemed a foolish thing, to look for help and deliverance by the miseries of another?—to look for life by his death? The apostle declares at large that such it was esteemed, 1 Cor. i. So was it in the wisdom of the world. But even on the account of these things is he honourable, glorious, and precious in the sight of them that do believe, 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7. For even herein he was "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 24. And the apostle declares at large the grounds and reasons of the different thoughts and apprehensions of men concerning the cross and sufferings of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 3–6.

CHAPTER VII.

The Glory of Christ in his Exaltation after the Accomplishment of the Work of Mediation in this World.

We may, in the next place, behold the glory of Christ, with respect unto his office, in the actings of God towards him which ensued on his discharge of it in this world, in his OWN EXALTATION.

These are the two heads whereunto all the prophecies and predictions concerning Jesus Christ under the Old Testament are referred, —namely, his sufferings, and the glory that ensued thereon, 1 Peter i. 11. All the prophets testified beforehand "of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." So when he himself opened the Scriptures unto his disciples, he gave them this as the sum of the doctrine contained in them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered

these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 26. The same is frequently expressed elsewhere, Rom. xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 5–9.

So much as we know of Christ, his sufferings, and his glory, so much do we understand of the Scripture, and no more.

These are the two heads of the mediation of Christ and his kingdom, and this is their order which they communicate unto the church, —first sufferings, and then glory: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him," 2 Tim. ii. 12. They do but deceive themselves who design any other method of these things. Some would reign here in this world; and we may say, with the apostle, "Would you did reign, that we might reign with you." But the members of the mystical body must be conformed unto the Head. In him sufferings went before glory; and so they must in them. The order in the kingdom of Satan and the world is contrary hereunto. First the good things of this life, and then eternal misery, is the method of that kingdom, Luke xvi. 25.

These are the two springs of the salvation of the church,—the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth, from which all the golden oil, whereby the church is dedicated unto God and sanctified, doth flow. This glory of Christ in his exaltation, which followed on his sufferings, is that which we now inquire into. And we shall state our apprehensions of it in the ensuing observations:—

1. This is peculiarly *that glory* which the Lord Christ prays that his disciples may be where he is to behold it. It is not solely so, as it is considered absolutely; but it is that wherein all the other parts of his glory are made manifest. It is the evidence, the pledge, the means of the manifestation of them all. As unto all the instances of his glory before insisted on, there was a veil drawn over them whilst he was in this world. Hence the most saw nothing of it, and the best saw it but obscurely. But in this glory that veil is taken off, whereby the whole glory of his person in itself and in the work of mediation is most illustriously manifested. When we shall immediately behold this glory, we shall see him as he is. This is that glory whereof the Father made grant unto him before the foundation of the world, and wherewith he was actually invested upon his ascension.

2. By this glory of Christ I do not understand the *essential glory* of his divine nature, or his being absolutely in his own person "over all, God blessed for ever;" but the manifestation of this glory in particular, after it had been veiled in this world under the "form of a servant," belongs hereunto. The divine glory of Christ in his person belongs not unto his exaltation; but the manifestation of it doth so. It was not given him by free donation; but the declaration of it unto the church of angels and men after his humiliation was so. He left it not whilst he was in this world; but the direct evidence and decla-

ration of it he laid aside, until he was "declared to be the Son of God with power," by the resurrection from the dead.

When the sun is under a total eclipse, he loseth nothing of his native beauty, light, and glory. He is still the same that he was from the beginning,—a "great light to rule the day." To us he appears as a dark, useless meteor; but when he comes by his course to free himself from the lunar interposition, unto his proper aspect towards us, he manifests again his native light and glory. So was it with the divine nature of Christ, as we have before declared. He veiled the glory of it by the interposition of the flesh, or the assumption of our nature to be his own; with this addition, that therein he took on him the "form of a servant,"—of a person of mean and low degree. But this temporary eclipse being past and over, it now shines forth in its infinite lustre and beauty, which belongs unto the present exaltation of his person. And when those who beheld him here as a poor, sorrowful, persecuted man, dying on the cross, came to see him in all the infinite, uncreated glories of the divine nature, manifesting themselves in his person, it could not but fill their souls with transcendent joy and admiration. And this is one reason of his prayer for them whilst he was on the earth, that they might be where he is to behold his glory; for he knew what ineffable satisfaction it would be unto them for evermore.

3. I do not understand absolutely *the glorification of the human nature* of Christ,—that very soul and body wherein he lived and died, suffered and rose again,—though that also be included herein. This also were a subject meet for our contemplation, especially as it is the exemplar of that glory which he will bring all those unto who believe in him. But because at present we look somewhat farther, I shall observe only one or two things concerning it.

(1.) *That very nature itself* which he took on him in this world, is exalted into glory. Some, under a pretence of great subtility and accuracy, do deny that he hath either flesh or blood in heaven; that is, as to the substance of them, however you may suppose that they are changed, purified, glorified. The great foundation of the church and all Gospel faith, is, that he was made flesh, that he did partake of flesh and blood, even as did the children. That he hath forsaken that flesh and blood which he was made in the womb of the blessed Virgin,—wherein he lived and died, which he offered unto God in sacrifice, and wherein he rose from the dead,—is a Socinian fiction. What is the true nature of the glorification of the humanity of Christ, neither those who thus surmise, nor we, can perfectly comprehend. It doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be; much less is it evident unto us what he is, whom we shall be like. But that he is still in the same human nature wherein he was on the earth,

that he hath the same rational soul and the same body, is a fundamental article of the Christian faith.

(2.) This nature of the man Christ Jesus is *filled with all the divine graces and perfections* whereof a limited, created nature is capable. It is not deified, it is not made a god;—it doth not in heaven coalesce into one nature with the divine by a composition of them;—it hath not any essential property of the Deity communicated unto it, so as subjectively to reside in it;—it is not made omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; but it is exalted in a fulness of all divine perfection ineffably above the glory of angels and men. It is incomprehensibly nearer God than they all,—hath communications from God, in glorious light, love, and power, ineffably above them all; but it is still a creature.

For the substance of this glory of the human nature of Christ, believers shall be made partakers of it; for when we see him as he is, we shall be like him; but as unto the degrees and measures of it, his glory is above all that we can be made partakers of. "There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; and one star differeth from another in glory," as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 41. And if there be a difference in glory among the stars themselves as to some degrees of the same glory, how much more is there between the glory of the sun and that of any star whatever! Such is the difference that is, and will be unto eternity, between the human nature of Christ and what glorified believers do attain unto. But yet this is not that properly wherein the glory of Christ in his exaltation, after his humiliation and death, doth consist. The things that belong unto it may be reduced unto the ensuing heads.

1. It consisteth in the *exaltation* of the human nature, as subsisting in the divine person, above the whole creation of God in power, dignity, authority, and rule, with all things that the wisdom of God hath appointed to render the glory of it illustrious. I have so largely insisted on the explication and confirmation of this part of the present glory of Christ, in the exposition of Heb. i. 2, 3, that I have nothing more to add thereunto.

2. It doth so in the *evidence* given of the infinite *love* of God the Father unto him, and his delight in him, with the eternal approbation of his discharge of the office committed unto him. Hence he is said "to sit at the right hand of God," or at "the right hand of the Majesty on high." That the glory and dignity of Christ in his exaltation is singular, the highest that can be given to a creature, incomprehensible;—that he is, with respect unto the discharge of his office, under the eternal approbation of God;—that, as so gloriously exalted, he is proclaimed unto the whole creation,—are all contained in this expression.

3. Hereunto is added the full *manifestation* of his own divine wisdom, love, and grace, in the work of mediation and redemption of the church. This glory is absolutely singular and peculiar unto him. Neither angels nor men have the least interest in it. Here, we see it darkly as in a glass; above, it shines forth in its brightness, to the eternal joy of them who behold him.

This is that glory which our Lord Jesus Christ in an especial manner prayed that his disciples might behold. This is that whereof we ought to endeavour a prospect by faith;—by faith, I say, and not by imagination. Vain and foolish men, having general notions of this glory of Christ, knowing nothing of the real nature of it, have endeavoured to represent it in pictures and images, with all that lustre and beauty which the art of painting, with the ornaments of gold and jewels, can give unto them. This is that representation of the present glory of Christ, which, being made and proposed unto the imagination and carnal affections of superstitious persons, carrieth such a show of devotion and veneration in the Papal Church. But they err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the eternal glory of the Son of God.

This is the sole foundation of all our meditations herein. The glory that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the real actual possession of in heaven can be no otherwise seen or apprehended in this world, but in the light of faith fixing itself on divine revelation. To behold this glory of Christ is not an act of fancy or imagination. It doth not consist in framing unto ourselves the shape of a glorious person in heaven. But the steady exercise of faith on the revelation and description made of this glory of Christ in the Scripture, is the ground, rule, and measure, of all divine meditations thereon.

Hereon our duty it is to call ourselves to an account as unto our endeavour after a gracious view of this glory of Christ:—When did we steadfastly behold it? when had we such a view of it as wherein our souls have been satisfied and refreshed? It is declared and represented unto us as one of the chief props of our faith, as a help of our joy, as an object of our hope, as a ground of our consolation,—as our greatest encouragement unto obedience and suffering. Are our minds every day conversant with thoughts hereof? or do we think ourselves not much concerned herein? Do we look upon it as that which is without us and above us,—as that which we shall have time enough to consider when we come to heaven? So is it with many. They care neither where Christ is nor what he is, so that one way or other they may be saved by him. They hope, as they pretend, that they shall see him and his glory in heaven,—and that they suppose to be time enough; but in vain do they pretend a desire thereof,—in vain are their expectations of any such thing. They who endeavour not to behold the glory of Christ in this world, as hath been often said,

shall never behold him in glory hereafter unto their satisfaction; nor do they desire so to do, only they suppose it a part of that relief which they would have when they are gone out of this world. For what should beget such a desire in them? Nothing can do it but some view of it here by faith; which they despise, or totally neglect. Every pretence of a desire of heaven, and of the presence of Christ therein, that doth not arise from, that is not resolved into, that prospect which we have of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, is mere fancy and imagination.

Our constant exercise in meditation on this glory of Christ will fill us with joy on his account; which is an effectual motive unto the duty itself. We are for the most part selfish, and look no farther than our own concernments. So we may be pardoned and saved by him, we care not much how it is with himself, but only presume it is well enough. We find not any concernment of our own therein. But this frame is directly opposite unto the genius of divine faith and love. For their principal actings consist in preferring Christ above ourselves, and our concerns in him above all our own. Let this, then, stir us up unto the contemplation of this glory. Who is it that is thus exalted over all? Who is thus encompassed with glory, majesty, and power? Who is it that sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,—all his enemies being made his footstool? Is it not he who in this world was poor, despised, persecuted, and slain,—all for our sakes? Is it not the same Jesus who loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us in his own blood? So the apostle told the Jews, that the same "Jesus whom they slew and hanged on a tree, God had exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 30, 31. If we have any valuation of his love, if we have any concernment in what he hath done and suffered for the church, we cannot but rejoice in his present state and glory.

Let the world rage whilst it pleaseth; let it set itself with all its power and craft against every thing of Christ that is in it,—which, whatever is by some otherwise pretended, proceeds from a hatred unto his person; let men make themselves drunk with the blood of his saints; we have this to oppose unto all their attempts, unto our supportment, —namely, what he says of himself: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death," Rev i. 17, 18.

Blessed Jesus! we can add nothing to thee, nothing to thy glory; but it is a joy of heart unto us that thou art what thou art,—that thou art so gloriously exalted at the right hand of God; and we do long more fully and clearly to behold that glory, according to thy prayer and promise.

CHAPTER VIII.

Representations of the Glory of Christ under the Old Testament.

It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he declared unto his disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke xxiv. 27. It is therefore manifest that Moses, and the Prophets, and all the Scriptures, do give testimony unto him and his glory. This is the line of life and light which runs through the whole Old Testament; without the conduct whereof we can understand nothing aright therein: and the neglect hereof is that which makes many as blind in reading the books of it as are the Jews,—the veil being upon their minds. It is faith alone, discovering the glory of Christ, that can remove that veil of darkness which covers the minds of men in reading the Old Testament, as the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 14–16. I shall, therefore, consider briefly some of those ways and means whereby the glory of Christ was represented unto believers under the Old Testament.

1. It was so in the institution of the *beautiful worship of the law*, with all the means of it. Herein have they the advantage above all the splendid ceremonies that men can invent in the outward worship of God; they were designed and framed in divine wisdom to represent the glory of Christ, in his person and his office. This nothing of human invention can do, or once pretend unto. Men cannot create mysteries, nor can give unto anything natural in itself a mystical signification. But so it was in the old divine institutions. What were the tabernacle and temple? What was the holy place with the utensils of it? What was the oracle, the ark, the cherubim, the mercy-seat, placed therein? What was the high priest in all his vestments and administrations? What were the sacrifices and annual sprinkling of blood in the most holy place? What was the whole system of their religious worship? Were they anything but representations of Christ in the glory of his person and his office? They were a shadow, and the body represented by that shadow was Christ. If any would see how the Lord Christ was in particular foresignified and represented in them, he may peruse our exposition on the 9th chapter of the Epistle unto the Hebrews, where it is handled so at large as that I shall not here again insist upon it. The sum is, "Moses was faithful in all the house of God, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken afterward," Heb. iii. 5. All that Moses did in the erection of the tabernacle, and the institution of all its services, was but to give an antecedent testimony by way of representation, unto the things of Christ that were afterward to be revealed.

And that also was the substance of the ministry of the prophets, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. The dark apprehensions of the glory of Christ, which by these means they obtained, were the life of the church of old.

2. It was represented in the *mystical account* which is given us of his communion with his church in love and grace. As this is intimated in many places of Scripture, so there is one entire book designed unto its declaration. This is the divine Song of Solomon, who was a type of Christ, and a penman of the Holy Ghost therein. A gracious record it is of the divine communications of Christ in love and grace unto his church, with their returns of love unto him, and delight in him. And then may a man judge himself to have somewhat profited in the experience of the mystery of a blessed intercourse and communion with Christ, when the expressions of them in that holy dialogue do give light and life unto his mind, and efficaciously communicate unto him an experience of their power. But because these things are little understood by many, the book itself is much neglected, if not despised; yea, to such impudence have some arrived, in foaming out their own shame, as that they have ridiculed the expressions of it. But we are foretold of such mockers in the last days, that should walk after their own ungodly lusts; they are not of our present consideration.

The former instance of the representations of the glory of Christ in their institutions of *outward worship*, with this record of the *inward communion* they had with Christ in grace, faith, and love, gives us the substance of that view which they had of his glory. What holy strains of delight and admiration, what raptures of joy, what solemn and divine complacency, what ardency of affection, and diligence in attendance unto the means of enjoying communion with him, this discovery of the glory of Christ wrought in the souls of them that did believe, is emphatically expressed in that discourse. A few days, a few hours spent in the frame characterized in it, is a blessedness excelling all the treasures of the earth; and if we, whose revelations of the same glory do far exceed theirs, should be found to come short of them in ardency of affection unto Christ, and continual holy admiration of his excellencies, we shall one day be judged unworthy to have received them.

3. It was so represented and made known under the Old Testament, in his *personal appearances* on various occasions unto several eminent persons, leaders of the church in their generations. This he did as a *præludium* to his incarnation. He was as yet God only; but appeared in the assumed shape of a man, to signify what he would be. He did not create a human nature, and unite it unto himself for such a season; only by his divine power he acted the shape of a man composed of what ethereal substance he pleased, immediately to be dissolved. So he appeared to Abraham, to Jacob,

to Moses, to Joshua, and others; as I have at large elsewhere proved and confirmed. And hereon, also, because he was the divine person who dwelt in and dwelt with the church, under the Old Testament, from first to last, in so doing he constantly assumes unto himself human affections, to intimate that a season would come when he would immediately act in that nature. And, indeed, after the fall there is nothing spoken of God in the Old Testament, nothing of his institutions, nothing of the way and manner of dealing with the church, but what hath respect unto the future incarnation of Christ. And it had been absurd to bring in God under perpetual anthropopathies, as grieving, repenting, being angry, well pleased, and the like, were it not but that the divine person intended was to take on him the nature wherein such affections do dwell.

4. It was represented in *prophetical visions*. So the apostle affirms that the vision which Isaiah had of him was when he saw his glory, John xii. 41. And it was a blessed representation thereof; for his divine person being exalted on a throne of glory, "his train filled the temple." The whole train of his glorious grace filled the temple of his body. This is the true tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man;—the temple which was destroyed, and which he raised again in three days, wherein dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, Col. ii. 9. This glory was now presented unto the view of Isaiah, chap. vi. 1–5; which filled him with dread and astonishment. But from thence he was relieved, by an act of the ministry of that glorious one, taking away his iniquity by a coal from the altar; which typified the purifying efficacy of his sacrifice. This was food for the souls of believers: in these and on the like occasions did the whole church lift up their voice in that holy cry, "Make haste, our Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, on the mountains of spices."

Of the same nature was his glorious appearance on mount Sinai at the giving of the law, Exod. xix.;—for the description thereof by the Psalmist, Ps. lxviii. 17, 18, is applied by the apostle unto the ascension of Christ after his resurrection, Eph. iv. 8. Only, as it was then full of outward terror, because of the giving of the fiery law, it was referred unto by the Psalmist as full of mercy, with respect unto his accomplishment of the same law. His *giving* of it was as death unto them concerned, because of its holiness, and the severity of the curse wherewith it was attended; his *fulfilling* of it was life, by the pardon and righteousness which issued from thence.

5. The doctrine of his *incarnation*, whereby he became the subject of all that glory which we inquire after, was revealed, although not so clearly as by the Gospel, after the actual accomplishment of the thing itself. In how many places this is done in the Old Testament I have elsewhere declared; at least I have explained and vin-

dicated many of them (for no man can presume to know them all),—"Vindiciæ Evangelicæ."[1] One instance, therefore, shall here suffice; and this is that of the same prophet Isaiah, chap. ix. 6, 7, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This one testimony is sufficient to confound all Jews, Socinians, and other enemies of the glory of Christ. I do acknowledge that, notwithstanding this declaration of the glory of Christ in his future incarnation and rule, there remained much darkness in the minds of them unto whom it was then made. For although they might and did acquiesce in the truth of the revelation, yet they could frame to themselves no notions of the way or manner of its accomplishment. But now, when every word of it is explained, declared, and its mystical sense visibly laid open unto us in the Gospel, and by the accomplishment exactly answering every expression in it, it is judicial blindness not to receive it. Nothing but the satanical pride of the hearts of men, which will admit of no effects of infinite wisdom but what they suppose they can comprehend, can shut their eyes against the light of this truth.

6. *Promises, prophecies, predictions,* concerning his person, his coming, his office, his kingdom, and his glory in them all, with the wisdom, grace, and love of God to the church in him, are the line of life, as was said, which runs through all the writings of the Old Testament, and takes up a great portion of them. Those were the things which he expounded unto his disciples out of Moses and all the Prophets. Concerning these things he appealed to the Scriptures against all his adversaries: "Search the Scriptures; for they are they which testify of me." And if we find them not, if we discern them not therein, it is because a veil of blindness is over our minds. Nor can we read, study, or meditate on the writings of the Old Testament unto any advantage, unless we design to find out and behold the glory of Christ, declared and represented in them. For want hereof they are a sealed book to many unto this day.

7. It is usual in the Old Testament to set out the glory of Christ under *metaphorical expressions;* yea, it aboundeth therein. For such allusions are exceedingly suited to let in a sense into our minds of those things which we cannot distinctly comprehend. And there is

[1] The "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ" is a work which Dr Owen wrote in reply to Biddle the Socinian, and which will be found in another department of this edition of his works.—Ed.

an infinite condescension of divine wisdom in this way of instruction, representing unto us the power of things spiritual in what we naturally discern. Instances of this kind, in calling the Lord Christ by the names of those creatures which unto our senses represent that excellency which is spiritually in him, are innumerable. So he is called the rose, for the sweet savour of his love, grace, and obedience;—the lily, for his gracious beauty and amiableness;—the pearl of price, for his worth, for to them that believe he is precious;—the vine, for his fruitfulness;—the lion, for his power;—the lamb, for his meekness and fitness for sacrifice; with other things of the like kind almost innumerable.

These things have I mentioned, not with any design to search into the depth of this treasury of those divine truths concerning the glory of Christ: but only to give a little light unto the words of the evangelist, that he opened unto his disciples out of Moses and all the Prophets the things which concerned himself; and to stir up our own souls unto a contemplation of them as contained therein.

CHAPTER IX.

The Glory of Christ in his intimate Conjunction with the Church.

What concerns the glory of Christ in the mission of the Holy Ghost unto the church, with all the divine truths that are branched from it, I have at large declared in my discourse concerning the whole dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Here, therefore, it must have no place amongst those many other things which offer themselves unto our contemplation as part of this glory, or intimately belonging thereunto. I shall insist briefly on three only, which cannot be reduced directly unto the former heads.

And the first of these is,—*That intimate conjunction that is between Christ and the church;* whence it is just and equal in the sight of God, according unto the rules of his eternal righteousness, that what he did and suffered in the discharge of his office, should be esteemed, reckoned, and imputed unto us, as unto all the fruits and benefits of it, as if we had done and suffered the same things ourselves. For this conjunction of his with us was an act of his own mind and will, wherein he is ineffably glorious.

The enemies of the glory of Christ and of his cross do take this for granted, that there ought to be such a conjunction between the guilty person and him that suffers for him, as that in him the guilty person may be said, in some sense, to undergo the punishment himself. But then they affirm, on the other hand, that there was no such conjunc-

tion between Christ and sinners,—none at all; but that he was a man, as they were men; and otherwise, that he was at the greatest distance from them all as it is possible for one man to be from another, Socin. de Servat. lib. iii. cap. 3. The falseness of this latter assertion, and the gross ignorance of the Scripture, under a pretence of subtility, in them that make it, will evidently appear in our ensuing Discourse.

The apostle tells us, 1 Peter ii. 24, that in "his own self he bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" and, chap. iii. 18, that he "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." But this seems somewhat strange unto reason. Where is the justice, where is the equity, that the just should suffer for the unjust? Where is divine righteousness herein? For it was an act of God: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6. The equity hereof, with the grounds of it, must be here a little inquired into.

First of all, it is certain that all the elect, the whole church of God, fell in Adam under the curse due to the transgression of the law. It is so also, that in this curse death, both temporal and eternal, was contained. This curse none could undergo and be saved. Nor was it consistent with the righteousness, or holiness, or truth of God, that sin should go unpunished. Wherefore there was a necessity, upon a supposition of God's decree to save his church, of a *translation of punishment*,—namely, from them who had deserved it, and could not bear it, unto one who had not deserved it, but could bear it.

A supposition of this translation of punishment by divine dispensation is the foundation of Christian religion, yea, of all supernatural revelation contained in the Scripture. This was first intimated in the *first promise;* and afterward explained and confirmed in all the institutions of the Old Testament. For although in the sacrifices of the law, there was a revival of the greatest and most fundamental principle of the law of nature,—namely, that God is to be worshipped with our best,—yet the principal end and use of them was to represent this translation of punishment from the offender unto another, who was to be a sacrifice in his stead.

The reasons of the equity hereof, and the unspeakable glory of Christ herein, is what we now inquire into. And I shall reduce what ought to be spoken hereunto to the ensuing heads:—

I. It is not *contrary* unto the nature of divine justice, it doth not interfere with the principles of natural light in man, that in *sundry cases some persons should suffer punishment for the sins and offences of others.*

I shall at present give this assertion no other confirmation, but only that God hath often done so, who will, who can, do no iniquity.

So he affirms that he will do, Exod. xx. 5, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." It is no exception of weight, that they also are sinners, continuing in their fathers' sins; for the worst of sinners must not be dealt unjustly withal: but they must be so if they are punished for their fathers' sins, and it be absolutely unlawful that any one should be punished for the sin of another.

So the church affirms, "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities," Lam. v. 7. And so it was; for in the Babylonish captivity God punished the sins of their forefathers, especially those committed in the days of Manasseh, 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27; as afterward, in the final destruction of that church and nation, God punished in them the guilt of all bloody persecutions from the beginning of the world, Luke xi. 50, 51.

So Canaan was cursed for the sin of his father, Gen. ix. 25. Saul's seven sons were put to death for their father's bloody cruelty, 2 Sam. xxi. 9, 14. For the sin of David, seventy thousand of the people were destroyed by an angel, concerning whom he said, "It is I that have sinned and done evil; these sheep, what have they done?" 2 Sam. xxiv. 15–17. See also 1 Kings xxi. 29. So was it with all the children or infants that perished in the flood, or in the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah. And other instances of the like nature may be assigned.

It is therefore evident that there is no inconsistency with the nature of divine justice, nor the rules of reason among men, that in sundry cases the sins of some may be punished on others.

II. It is to be observed, that this administration of justice is not promiscuous,—that any whatever may be punished for the sins of any others. There is always a special cause and reason of it; and this is a *peculiar conjunction* between them who sin and those who are punished for their sins. And two things belong unto this conjunction. 1. Especial relation; 2. Especial mutual interest.

1. There is an especial *relation* required unto this translation of punishment;—such as that between parents and children, as in most of the instances before given; or between a king and subjects, as in the case of David. Hereby the persons sinning and those suffering are constituted one body, wherein if one member offend, another may justly suffer: the back may answer for what the hand takes away.

2. It consists in mutual *interest*. Those whose sins are punished in others have such an interest in them, as that their being so is a punishment unto themselves. Therefore are such sinners threatened with the punishment and evils that shall befall their posterity or children for their sakes; which is highly penal unto themselves, Numb. xiv. 33, "Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years,

and bear your whoredoms." The punishment due to their sins is in part transferred unto their children; and therein did the sting of their own punishment also consist.

III. There is a greater, a more intimate *conjunction*, a nearer relation, a higher mutual interest, *between Christ and the church*, than ever was or can be between any other persons or relations in the world, whereon it became just and equal in the sight of God that he should suffer for us, and that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto us; which is farther to be cleared.

There neither is nor can be any more than a threefold conjunction between divers distinct persons. The first is natural; the second is moral, whereunto I refer that which is spiritual or mystical; and the third federal, by virtue of mutual compact. In all these ways is Christ in conjunction with his church, and in every one of them in a way singular and peculiar.

1. The first conjunction of distinct persons is *natural*. God hath made all mankind "of one blood," Acts xvii. 26,—whereby there is a cognation and alliance between them all. Hence every man is every man's brother or neighbour, unto whom loving-kindness is to be showed, Luke x. 36. And this conjunction was between Christ and the church, as the apostle declares, Heb. ii. 14, 15, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hence "both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," verse 11. His infinite condescension, in coming into this communion and conjunction of nature with us, was before declared; but it is not common, like that between all other men, partakers of the same nature. There are two things wherein it was peculiar and eminent.

(1.) This conjunction between him and the church did not arise from a *necessity of nature*, but from a voluntary act of his will. The conjunction that is between all others is necessary. Every man is every man's brother, whether he will or no, by being a man. Natural generation, communicating to every one his subsistence in the same nature, prevents all acts of their own will and choice. With the Lord Christ it was otherwise, as the text affirms. For such reasons as are there expressed, he did, by an act of his own will, partake of flesh and blood, or came into this conjunction with us. He did it of his own choice, because the children did partake of the same. He would be what the children were. Wherefore the conjunction of Christ in human nature with the church is ineffably distinct from that common conjunction which is amongst all others in the same nature. And, therefore, although it should not be meet amongst mere men, that

one should act and suffer in the stead of others, because they are all thus related to one another, as it were, whether they will or no; yet this could not reach the Lord Christ, who, in a strange and wonderful manner, came into this conjunction by a mere act of his own.

(2.) He came into it on this design, and for this only end,—namely, that in *our nature, taken to be his own*, he might do and suffer what was to be done and suffered for the church: so it is added in the text, "That by death he might destroy him who had the power of death; and deliver them who through fear of death were subject to bondage." This was the only end of his conjunction in nature with the church; and this puts the case between him and it at a vast distance from what is or may be between other men.

It is a foolish thing to argue, that because a mere participation of the same nature among men is not sufficient to warrant the righteousness of punishing one for another,—therefore the conjunction in the same nature betwixt Christ and the church is not a sufficient and just foundation of his suffering for us, and in our stead. For, by an *act of his own will and choice*, he did partake of our nature, and that for this very end, that therein he might suffer for us; as the Holy Ghost expressly declares. Amongst others, there neither is nor can be any thing of this nature, and so no objection from what is equal or unequal amongst them can arise against what is equal between Christ and the church. And herein is he glorious and precious unto them that believe, as we shall see immediately.

2. There is a *mystical conjunction* between Christ and the church, which answers all the most strict, real, or moral unions or conjunctions between other persons or things. Such is the conjunction between the head of a body and its members, or the tree of the vine and its branches, which are real; or between a husband and wife, which is moral and real also. That there is such a conjunction between Christ and his church the Scripture plentifully declares, as also that it is the foundation of the equity of his suffering in its stead. So speaks the apostle, Eph. v. 25–32, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,"—that is, his wife, the bride, the Lamb's wife,—"and gave himself for it," &c. Being the head and husband of the church, which was to be sanctified and saved, and could be so no otherwise but by his blood and sufferings, he was both meet so to suffer, and it was righteous also that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto them for whom he both did it and suffered. Let the adversaries of the glory of Christ assign any one instance of such a conjunction, union, and relation between any amongst mankind, as is between Christ and the church, and they may give some countenance unto their cavils against his obedience and sufferings in our stead, with the imputation of what he did and suffered

unto us. But the glory of Christ is singular herein, and as such it appears unto them by whom the mystery of it is, in any measure, spiritually apprehended.

But yet it will be said, that this mystical conjunction of Christ with his church is consequential unto what he did and suffered for it; for it ensues on the conversion of men unto him. For it is by faith that we are implanted into him. Until that be actually wrought in us, we have no mystical conjunction with him. He is not a head or a husband unto unregenerate, unsanctified unbelievers, whilst they continue so to be; and such was the state of the whole church when Christ suffered for us, Rom. v. 8; Eph. ii. 5. There was, therefore, no such mystical conjunction between him and the church as to render it meet and equal that he should suffer in its stead. Wherefore the church is the effect of the work of redemption,—that which rose out of it, which was made and constituted by it; and cannot be so the object of it as that which was to be redeemed by virtue of an antecedent conjunction with it. I answer,—

(1.) Although this mystical conjunction is not actually consummate without an actual participation of the Spirit of Christ, yet the church of the elect was designed antecedently unto all his sufferings to be his spouse and wife, so as that he might love her and suffer for her; so it is said, Hos. xii. 12, "Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep." Howbeit she was not his married wife until after he had served for her, and thereby purchased her to be his wife; yet as he served for her she is called his wife, because of his love unto her, and because she was so designed to be, upon his service. So was the church designed to be the spouse of Christ in the counsel of God; whereon he loved her and gave himself for her.

Hence, in the work of redemption the church was the object of it, as designed to be the spouse of Christ; and the effect of it, inasmuch as that thereby it was made meet for the full consummation of that alliance; as the apostle expressly declares, Eph. v. 25–27.

(2.) Antecedently unto all that the Lord Christ did and suffered for the church, there was a supreme act of the will of God the Father, *giving all the elect unto him*, intrusting them with him, to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved; as himself declares, John xvii. 6, 9, x. 14–16. And on these grounds this mystical conjunction between Christ and the church hath its virtue and efficacy before it be actually consummate.

3. There is a *federal conjunction* between distinct persons: and as this is various, according unto the variety of the interests and ends of them that enter into it; so that is most eminent, where one, by the common consent of all that are concerned, undertakes to be a sponsor or surety for others, to do and answer what on their part is required

of them for attaining the ends of the covenant. So did the Lord Christ undertake to be surety of the new covenant in behalf of the church, Heb. vii. 22, and thereon tendered himself unto God, to do and suffer for them, in their stead, and on their behalf, whatever was required, that they might be sanctified and saved. These things I have treated of at large elsewhere, as containing a great part of the mystery of the wisdom of God in the salvation of the church. Here, therefore, I do only observe, that this is that whereby the mystical conjunction that was between Christ and the church, whereon it was meet, just, and equal in the sight of God, that what he did and suffered should be imputed unto us, is completed.

These are some of the foundations of that mystery of transmitting the sins of the church, as to the guilt and punishment of them, from the sinners themselves unto another, every way innocent, pure, and righteous in himself,—which is the life, soul, and centre of all Scripture revelations. And herein is he exceedingly glorious and precious unto them that believe. No heart can conceive, no tongue can express the glory of Christ herein. Now, because his infinite condescension and love herein have been spoken to before, I shall here only instance its greatness in some of its effects.

1. It shines forth in the *exaltation of the righteousness of God* in the forgiveness of sins. There is no more adequate conception of the divine nature, than that of justice in rule and government. Hereunto it belongs to punish sin according unto its desert; and herein consisted the first actings of God as the governor of the rational creation. They did so in the eternal punishment of the angels that sinned, and the casting of Adam out of Paradise,—an emblem also of everlasting ruin. Now, all the church, all the elect of God, are sinners;—they were so in Adam,—they have been and are so in themselves. What doth become the justice of God to do thereon? Shall it dismiss them all unpunished? Where, then, is that justice which spared not the angels who sinned, nor Adam at the first? Would this procedure have any consonancy thereunto,—be reconcilable unto it? Wherefore the establishment of the righteousness of God on the one hand, and the forgiveness of sin on the other, seem so contradictory, as that many stumble and fall at it eternally. See Rom. x. 3, 4.

But in this interposition of Christ, in this translation of punishment from the church unto him, by virtue of his conjunction therewith, there is a blessed harmony between the righteousness of God and the forgiveness of sins;—the exemplification whereof is his eternal glory. "O blessed change! O sweet permutation!" as Justin Martyr speaks.

By virtue of his union with the church, which of his own accord he entered into, and his undertaking therein to answer for it in the

sight of God, it was a righteous thing with God to *lay the punishment of all our sins upon him*, so as that he might freely and graciously pardon them all, to the honour and exaltation of his justice, as well as of his grace and mercy, Rom. iii. 24–26.

Herein is he glorious in the sight of God, angels, and men. In him there is at the same time, in the same divine actings, a glorious resplendency of justice and mercy;—of the one in punishing, of the other in pardoning. The appearing inconsistency between the righteousness of God and the salvation of sinners, wherewith the consciences of convinced persons are exercised and terrified, and which is the rock on which most of them split themselves into eternal ruin, is herein removed and taken away. In his cross were divine holiness and vindictive justice exercised and manifested; and through his triumph, grace and mercy are exerted to the utmost. This is that glory which ravisheth the hearts and satiates the souls of them that believe. For what can they desire more, what is farther needful unto the rest and composure of their souls, than at one view to behold God eternally well pleased in the declaration of his righteousness and the exercise of his mercy, in order unto their salvation? In due apprehensions hereof let my soul live;—in the faith hereof let me die, and let present admiration of this glory make way for the eternal enjoyment of it in its beauty and fulness.

2. He is glorious in that the *law of God* in its *preceptive part*, or as to the obedience which it required, was perfectly fulfilled and accomplished. That it should be so, was absolutely necessary, from the wisdom, holiness, and righteousness of him by whom it was given. For what could be more remote from those divine perfections, than to give a law which never was to be fulfilled in them unto whom it was given, and who were to have the advantages of it? This could not be done by us; but through the obedience of Christ, by virtue of this his mystical conjunction with the church, the law was so fulfilled in us by being fulfilled for us, as that the glory of God in the giving of it, and annexing eternal rewards unto it, is exceedingly exalted. See Rom. viii. 3, 4.

This is that glory of Christ whereof one view by faith will scatter all the fears, answer all the objections, and give relief against all the despondencies, of poor, tempted, doubting souls; and an anchor it will be unto all believers, which they may cast within the veil, to hold them firm and steadfast in all trials, storms, and temptations in life and death.

CHAPTER X.

The Glory of Christ in the Communication of Himself unto Believers.

Another instance of the glory of Christ, which we are to behold here by faith, and hope that we shall do so by sight hereafter, consists in the mysterious communication of himself, and all the benefits of his mediation, unto the souls of them that do believe, to their present happiness and future eternal blessedness.

Hereby he becomes theirs as they are his; which is the life, the glory, and consolation of the church, Cant. vi. 3, ii. 16, vii. 10,—he and all that he is being appropriated unto them, by virtue of their mystical union. There is, there must be, some ground, formal reason, and cause of this relation between Christ and the church, whereby he is theirs, and they are his;—he is in them, and they in him, so as it is not between him and other men in the world.

The apostle, speaking of this communication of Christ unto the church, and the union between them which doth ensue thereon, affirms that it is "a great mystery;" for "I speak," saith he, "concerning Christ and the church," Eph. v. 32.

I shall very briefly inquire into the causes, ways, and means of this *mysterious communication*, whereby he is made to be ours, to be in us, to dwell with us, and all the benefits of his mediation to belong unto us. For, as was said, it is evident that he doth not thus communicate himself unto all by *natural necessity*, as the sun gives light equally unto the whole world,—nor is he present with all by a ubiquity of his human nature,—nor, as some dream, by a diffusion of his rational soul into all,—nor doth he become ours by a carnal eating of him in the sacrament; but this mystery proceeds from, and depends on, other reasons and causes, as we shall briefly declare.

But yet, before I proceed to declare the way and manner whereby Christ communicateth himself unto the church, I must premise something of divine communications in general and their glory. And I shall do this by touching a little on the harmony and correspondency that is between the old creation and the new.

1. All *being, power, goodness, and wisdom*, were originally essentially, infinitely in God. And in them, with the other perfections of his nature, consisted his essential glory.

2. The old creation was a *communication* of being and goodness by almighty power, directed by infinite wisdom, unto all things that were created for the manifestation of that glory. This was the first communication of God unto anything without himself; and it was ex-

ceeding glorious. See Ps. xix. 1; Rom. i. 20. And it was a curious machine, framed in the subordination and dependency of one thing on another; without which they could not subsist, nor have a continuance of their beings. All creatures below live on the earth and the products of it; the earth, for its whole production, depends on the sun and other heavenly bodies; as God declares, Hos. ii. 21, 22, "I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." God hath given a subordination of things in a concatenation of causes, whereon their subsistence doth depend. Yet,—

3. In this mutual dependency on and supplies unto one another, they all depend on and are influenced from God himself,—the eternal fountain of being, power, and goodness. "He hears the heavens;" and in the continuation of this order, by constant divine communication of being, goodness, and power, unto all things, God is no less glorified than in the first creation of them, Acts xiv. 15–17, xvii. 24–29.

4. This glory of God is visible in the matter of it, and is obvious unto the reason of mankind; for from his works of creation and providence they may learn his eternal power and Godhead, wherein he is essentially glorious.

5. But by this divine communication, God did not intend only to glorify himself in the essential properties of his nature, but his existence also in three persons, of Father, Son, and Spirit. For although the whole creation in its first framing, and in its perfection, was, and is, by an emanation of power and goodness from the divine nature, in the person of the Father, as he is the fountain of the Trinity, whence he is said peculiarly to be the Creator of all things; yet the immediate operation in the creation was from the Son, the power and wisdom of the Father, John i. 1–3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2. And as upon the first production of the mass of the creation, it was under the especial care of the Spirit of God, to preserve and cherish it unto the production of all distinct sorts of creatures, Gen. i. 2,—so in the continuance of the whole, there is an especial operation of the same Spirit in all things. Nothing can subsist one moment by virtue of the dependence which all things have on one another, without a continual emanation of power from him. See Ps. civ. 29, 30.

By these divine communications, in the production and preservation of the creature, doth God manifest his glory, and by them alone in the way of nature he doth so; and without them, although he would have been for ever essentially glorious, yet was it impossible that his glory should be known unto any but himself. Wherefore, on these divine communications doth depend the whole manifestation of the

glory of God. But this is far more eminent, though not in the outward effects of it so visible, in the new creation; as we shall see.

1. All goodness, grace, life, light, mercy, and power, which are the springs and causes of the new creation, are all originally in God, in the divine nature, and that infinitely and essentially. In them is God eternally or essentially glorious; and the whole design of the new creation was to manifest his glory in them, by external communications of them, and from them.

2. The first communication of and from these things is made unto Christ, as the *Head of the church.* For, in the first place, it pleased God that in him should all the fulness of these things dwell, so as that the whole new creation might consist in him, Col. i. 17–19. And this was the first egress of divine wisdom for the manifestation of the glory of God in these holy properties of his nature. For,—

3. This communication was made unto him as a *repository* and treasury of all that goodness, grace, life, light, power, and mercy, which were necessary for the constitution and preservation of the new creation. They were to be laid up in him, to be hid in him, to dwell in him; and from him to be communicated unto the whole mystical body designed unto him,—that is, the church. And this is the first emanation of divine power and wisdom, for the manifestation of his glory in the new creation. This constitution of Christ as the head of it, and the treasuring up in him all that was necessary for its production and preservation, wherein the church is chosen and pre-ordained in him unto grace and glory, is the spring and fountain of divine glory, in the communications that ensue thereon.

4. This communication unto Christ is, (1.) Unto his person; and then, (2.) With respect unto his office. It is in the person of Christ that all fulness doth originally dwell. On the assumption of human nature into personal union with the Son of God, all fulness dwells in him bodily, Col. ii. 9. And thereon receiving the Spirit in all fulness, and not by measure, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hid in him, Col. ii. 3, and he was filled with the unsearchable riches of divine grace, Eph. iii. 8–11. And the office of Christ is nothing but the way appointed in the wisdom of God for the communication of the treasures of grace which were communicated unto his person. This is the end of the whole office of Christ, in all the parts of it, as he is a priest, a prophet, and a king. They are, I say, nothing but the ways appointed by infinite wisdom for the communication of the grace laid up in his person unto the church. The transcendent glory hereof we have in some weak measure inquired into.

5. The decree of *election* prepared, if I may so say, the *mass of the new creation.* In the old creation, God first prepared and created the mass or matter of the whole; which afterward, by the power of the

Holy Spirit, was formed into all the distinct beings whereof the whole creation was to consist, and animated according to their distinct kinds.

And in order unto the production and perfecting of the work of the new creation, God did from eternity, in the holy purpose of his will, prepare, and in design set apart unto himself, that portion of mankind whereof it was to consist. Hereby they were only the peculiar matter that was to be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, and the glorious fabric of the church erected out of it. What was said, it may be, of the natural body by the Psalmist, is true of the mystical body of Christ, which is principally intended, Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." The substance of the church, whereof it was to be formed, was under the eye of God, as proposed in the decree of election; yet was it as such imperfect. It was not formed or shaped into members of the mystical body; but they were all written in the book of life. And in pursuance of the purpose of God, there they are by the Holy Spirit, in the whole course and continuance of time, in their several generations, fashioned into the shape designed for them.

6. This, therefore, is herein the glorious order of divine communications. From the infinite, eternal spring of wisdom, grace, goodness, and love, in the Father,—all the effects whereof unto this end were treasured up in the person and mediation of the Son,—the Holy Spirit, unto whom the actual application of them is committed, communicates life, light, power, grace, and mercy, unto all that are designed parts of the new creation. Hereon doth God glorify both the essential properties of his nature,—his infinite wisdom, power, goodness, and grace,—as the only eternal spring of all these things, and also his ineffable glorious existence in three persons, by the order of the communication of these things unto the church, which are originally from his nature. And herein is the glorious truth of the blessed Trinity,—which by some is opposed, by some neglected, by most looked on as that which is so much above them as that it doth not belong unto them,—made precious unto them that believe, and becomes the foundation of their faith and hope. In a view of the glorious order of those divine communications, we are in a steady contemplation of the ineffable glory of the existence of the nature of God in the three distinct persons of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

7. According unto this *divine order*, the elect in all ages are, by the Holy Spirit moving and acting on that mass of the new creation, formed and animated with spiritual life, light, grace, and power, unto the glory of God. They are not called accidentally, according unto the

external occasions and causes of their conversion unto God; but in every age, at his own time and season, the Holy Spirit communicates these things unto them in the order declared, unto the glory of God.

8. And in the same manner is the whole *new creation preserved* every day;—every moment there is vital power and strength, mercy and grace, communicated in this divine order to all believers in the world. There is a continual influence from the Fountain, from the Head, into all the members, whereby they all consist in him, are acted by him, who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. And the apostle declares that the whole constitution of church order is suited, as an external instrument, to promote these divine communications unto all the members of the church itself, Eph. iv. 13–15.

This in general is the *order of divine communications,* which is for the substance of it continued in heaven, and shall be so unto eternity; for God is, and ever will be, all, and in all. But at present it is invisible unto eyes of flesh, yea, the reason of men. Hence it is by the most despised;—they see no glory in it. But let us consider the prayer of the apostle, that it may be otherwise with us, Eph. i. 16–23. For the revelation made of the glory of God in the old creation is exceeding inferior to that which he makes of himself in the new.

Having premised these things in general concerning the glory of divine communications, I shall proceed to declare, in particular, the grounds and way whereby the Lord Christ communicates himself, and therewithal all the benefits of his mediation, unto them that do believe, as it was before proposed.

We on our part are said herein to receive him, and that by faith, John i. 12. Now, where he is received by us, he must be tendered, given, granted, or communicated unto us. And this he is by some divine acts of the Father, and some of his own.

The foundation of the whole is laid in a sovereign act of the will, the pleasure, the grace of the Father. And this is the order and method of all divine operations in the way and work of grace. They originally proceed all from him; and having effected their ends, do return, rest, and centre in him again. See Eph. i. 4–6. Wherefore, that Christ is made ours, that he is communicated unto us, is originally from the free act, grant, and donation, of the Father, 1 Cor. i. 30; Rom. v. 15–17. And hereunto sundry things do concur. As,—1. *His eternal purpose,* which he purposed in himself, to glorify his grace in all his elect, by this communication of Christ and the benefits of his mediation unto them; which the apostle declares at large, Eph. i. 2. His *granting all the elect unto Christ,* to be his own, so to do and suffer for them what was antecedaneously necessary unto the actual communication of himself unto them: "Thine they were, and thou gavest

them me," John xvii. 6. 3. The giving of the *promise*, or the constitution of the rule and law of the Gospel, whereby a participation of Christ, an interest in him and all that he is, is made over and assured unto believers, John i. 12; 1 John i. 1–4. 4. An act of *almighty power*, working and creating faith in the souls of the elect, enabling them to receive Christ so exhibited and communicated unto them by the Gospel, Eph. i. 19, 20, ii. 5–8.

These things, which I have but named, have an influence into the glory of Christ herein; for this communication of him unto the church is an effect of the eternal counsel, wisdom, grace, and power of the Father.

But they are the acts of Christ himself herein, which principally we inquire into, as those which manifest the glory of his wisdom, love, and condescension.

And,—1. He gives and communicates unto them *his Holy Spirit;* —the Holy Spirit as peculiarly his, as granted unto him of the Father, as inhabiting in him in all fulness. This Spirit—abiding originally as to his person, and immeasurably as unto his effects and operations, in himself—he gives unto all believers, to inhabit and abide in them also, John xiv. 14–20; 1 Cor. vi. 17; Rom. viii. 9. Hence follows an ineffable union between him and them. For as in his incarnation he took our nature into personal union with his own; so herein he takes our persons into a mystical union with himself. Hereby he becomes ours, and we are his.

And herein he is unspeakably glorious. For this mystery of the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him as the head, and the church as his body, animating the whole, is a transcendent effect of divine wisdom. There is nothing of this nature in the whole creation besides,—no such union, no such mutual communication. The strictest unions and relations in nature are but shadows of it, Eph. v. 25–32. Herein also is the Lord Christ precious unto them that do believe, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence unto the disobedient. This glorious, ineffable effect of his wisdom and grace; this rare, peculiar, singular way of the communication of himself unto the church, is by many despised. They know, it may be, some of them, what it is to be joined unto a harlot so as to become one flesh; but what it is to be joined unto the Lord so as to become one spirit, they know not. But this principle and spring of the spiritual life of the church, and of all vital, spiritual motions towards God and things heavenly, wherein and whereby "our life is hid with Christ in God," is the glory, the exaltation, the honour, the security of the church, unto the praise of the grace of God. The understanding of it in its causes, effects, operations, and privileges wherewith it is accompanied, is to be preferred above all the wisdom in and of the world.

2. He thus communicates himself unto us, by the *formation of a new nature*, his own nature, in us; so as that the very same spiritual nature is in him and in the church. Only, it is so with this difference, that in him it is in the absolute perfection of all those glorious graces wherein it doth consist; in the church it is in various measures and degrees, according as he is pleased to communicate it. But the same divine nature it is that is in him and us; for, through the precious promises of the Gospel, we are made partakers of his divine nature. It is not enough for us that he hath taken our nature to be his, unless he gives us also his nature to be ours;—that is, implants in our souls all those gracious qualifications, as unto the essence and substance of them, wherewith he himself in his human nature is endued. This is that new man, that new creature, that divine nature, that spirit which is born of the Spirit, that transformation into the image of Christ, that putting of him on, that workmanship of God whereunto in him we are created, that the Scripture so fully testifieth unto, John iii. 6; Rom. vi. 3–8; 2 Cor. iii. 18, v. 17; Eph. iv. 20–24; 2 Peter i. 4.

And that new heavenly nature which is thus formed in believers, as the first vital act of that union which is between Christ and them by the inhabitation of the same Spirit, is peculiarly his nature. For both is it so as it is in him the idea and the exemplar of it in us,—inasmuch as we are predestinated to be conformed unto his image,—and as it is wrought or produced in our souls by an emanation of power, virtue, and efficiency from him.

This is a most heavenly way of the communication of himself unto us, wherein of God "he is made unto us wisdom and sanctification." Hereon he says of his church, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;"—I see myself, my own nature, in them; whence they are comely and desirable. Hereby he makes way to "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." On this communication of Christ unto us, by the forming of his own nature in us, depends all the purity, the beauty, the holiness, the inward glory of the church. Hereby is it really, substantially, internally separated from the world, and distinguished from all others, who, in the outward form of things, in the profession and duties of religion, seem to be the same with them. Hereby it becomes the first-fruits of the creation unto God, bearing forth the renovation of his image in the world;—herein the Lord Christ is, and will be, glorious unto all eternity. I only mention these things, which deserve to be far more largely insisted on.

3. He doth the same by that *actual insition or implantation* into himself which he gives us by faith, which is of his own operation. For hereon two things do ensue;—one by the grace or power, the other

by the law or constitution, of the Gospel; which have a great influence into this *mystical communication of Christ* unto the church.

And the first of these is, that hereby there is communicated unto us, and we do derive, supplies of spiritual life, sustentation, motion, strength in grace, and perseverance from him continually. This is that which himself so divinely teacheth in the parable of the vine and its branches, John xv. 1–5. Hereby is there a continual communication from his all-fulness of grace unto the whole church and all the members of it, unto all the ends and duties of spiritual life. They live, nevertheless not they, but Christ liveth in them; and the life which they lead in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God. And the other,—by virtue of the law and constitution of the Gospel,—is, that hereon his righteousness and all the fruits of his mediation are imputed unto us; the glory of which mystery the apostle unfolds, Rom. iii.–v.

I might add hereunto the mutual inbeing that is between him and believers by love; for—the way of the communication of his love unto them being by the shedding of it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and their returns of love unto him being wrought in them by an almighty efficiency of the same Spirit—there is that which is deeply mysterious and glorious in it. I might mention also the continuation of his discharge of all his offices towards us, whereon all our receptions from him, or all the benefits of his mediation whereof we are made partakers, do depend. But the few instances that have been given of the glory of Christ in this mysterious communication of himself unto his church may suffice to give us such a view of it as to fill our hearts with holy admiration and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XI.

The Glory of Christ in the Recapitulation of all things in Him.

In the last place, the Lord Christ is peculiarly and eminently glorious in the *recapitulation of all things in him*, after they had been scattered and disordered by sin. This the apostle proposeth as the most signal effect of divine wisdom, and the sovereign pleasure of God.

"He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Eph. i. 8–10.

For the discovery of the mind of the Holy Ghost in these words, so far as I am at present concerned,—namely, as unto the representation of the glory of Christ in them,—sundry brief observations must be premised; and in them it will be necessary that we briefly declare the original of all these things in heaven and earth, their primitive order, the confusion that ensued thereon, with their restitution in Christ, and his glory thereby.

1. God alone hath all being in him. Hence he gives himself that name, "I AM," Exod. iii. 14. He was eternally All; when all things else that ever were, or now are, or shall be, were nothing. And when they are, they are no otherwise but as "they are of him, and through him, and to him," Rom. xi. 36. Moreover, his being and goodness are the same. The goodness of God is the meetness of the Divine Being to be communicative of itself in its effects. Hence this is the first notion of the divine nature,—infinite being and goodness, in a nature intelligent and self-subsistent. So the apostle declares it, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder," Heb. xi. 6.

2. In this state of infinite, eternal being and goodness, antecedent unto any act of wisdom or power without himself to give existence unto other things, God was, and is, eternally in himself all that he will be, all that he can be, unto eternity. For where there is infinite being and infinite goodness, there is infinite blessedness and happiness, whereunto nothing can be added. God is always the same. That is his name, אַתָּה הוּא—Ps. cii. 27, "Thou art he,"—always the same. All things that are, make no addition unto God, no change in his state. His blessedness, happiness, self-satisfaction, as well as all other his infinite perfections, were absolutely the same before the creation of any thing, whilst there was nothing but himself, as they are since he hath made all things: for the blessedness of God consists in the ineffable mutual inbeing of the three holy persons in the same nature, with the immanent reciprocal actings of the Father and the Son in the eternal love and complacency of the Spirit. Hereunto nothing can be added, herein no change can be made by any external work or effect of power. Herein doth God act in the perfect knowledge and perfect love of his own perfections, unto an infinite acquiescency therein,—which is the divine blessedness. This gives us the true notion of the divine nature antecedent unto the manifestation of it made by any outward effects:—infinite being and goodness, eternally blessed in the knowledge and enjoyment of itself by inconceivable, ineffable, internal actings, answering the manner of its subsistence, which is in three distinct persons.

3. This being and goodness of God, by his own will and pleasure acting themselves in infinite wisdom and power, produced the crea-

tion of all things. Herein he communicated a finite, limited, dependent being and goodness unto other things without himself. For all being and goodness being, as was said, in him alone, it was necessary that the first outward work and effect of the divine nature must be the communication of being and goodness unto other things. Wherefore, as when he had given unto every thing its being out of nothing, by the word of his power, saying, Let them be, and they were; so it is said, that he looked on all that he had made, "and, behold, they were exceeding good," Gen. i. 31. Being and goodness must be the first outward effects of the divine nature, which, being wrought by infinite power and wisdom, do represent unto us the glory of God in the creation of all things. Infinite being in self-subsistence, which is necessary in the first cause and spring of all things,—infinite goodness to communicate the effect of this being unto that which was not,—and infinite wisdom and power in that communication,—are gloriously manifested therein.

4. In this state, all things that were made, depended *immediately* on God himself, without the interposition of any other head of influence or rule. They had the continuance of their being and its preservation from the immediate actings of these properties of the divine nature whereby they were made; and their dependence on God was by virtue of that law, which was implanted on the principles and powers of their several natures by God himself.

5. Thus "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He provided himself of two distinct, rational families, that should depend on him according to a law of moral obedience, and thereby give glory to him; with two distinct habitations for them, cognate unto their nature and use,—heaven above, and the earth beneath. The earth he appointed for the habitation of man; which was every way suited unto the constitution of his nature, the preservation of his being, and the end of his creation in giving glory to God. Heaven he prepared for the habitation of the angels; which was suited unto the constitution of their nature, the preservation of their being, and the end of their creation, in giving glory to God. Wherefore, as man had power and dominion over all things here below, and was to use them all unto the glory of God,—by which means God received glory from them also, though in themselves brute and inanimate;—so the angels had the like dominion over the celestial and ethereal bodies, wherewith God hath fitted the place of their habitation, that through the contemplation and use of them God might have a revenue of glory and praise from them also. To suppose any other race of intellectual creatures, besides angels in heaven and men on earth, is not only without all countenance from any divine testimony, but it disturbs and disorders the whole representation of the glory of God

made unto us in the Scripture, and the whole design of his wisdom and grace, as declared therein. Intellectual creatures not comprehended in that government of God and mystery of his wisdom in Christ which the Scripture reveals, are a chimera framed in the imaginations of some men, scarce duly sensible of what it is to be wise unto sobriety.

6. This order of things was beautiful and comely. Hence were they all said to be "exceeding good." For each of these families had their own immediate, distinct dependence on God. He was the immediate head of them. There was no other common head interposed between God and them. They were not a head unto one another. There were no communications unto them, but what were immediate from God himself. And their union among themselves was in this alone, that all their obedience did meet and centre in God. So God made the heavens and the earth, and two distinct families in them, for himself.

7. This beautiful order in itself, this union between the two families of God, was disturbed, broken, dissolved by the entrance of sin; for hereby part of the family above, and the whole family below, fell off from their dependence on God; and ceasing to centre in him as their head, they fell into variance and enmity among themselves. For the centre of this union and order being removed and lost, nothing but enmity and confusion remained among them. Hereon, to show that its goodness was lost, God cursed the earth and all that was in it; for it was put in subjection unto man, who was now fallen from him. Howbeit he cursed not the heavens, which were in subjection unto the angels, because some of them only left their habitation; and the habitation of the residue was not to be cursed for their sakes. But mankind was wholly gone off from God.

8. The angels that sinned God utterly rejected for ever, as an example of his severity; the whole race of mankind he would not utterly cast off, but determined to recover and save a remnant, according to the election of grace; which, how he did it in a way of condecency unto all his divine perfections, I have elsewhere declared.

9. Howbeit, he would not restore them into their former state, so as to have again two distinct families, each in an immediate dependence on himself, though he left them in different and distinct habitations, Eph. iii. 15; but he would gather them both into one, and that under a new head, in whom the one part should be preserved from sinning, and the other delivered from sin committed.

10. This, then, is that which the apostle declares in these words, "To gather together in one all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." And so he again expresseth it, Col. i. 20, "To reconcile all things unto himself in him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." All things were fallen into dis-

order and confusion by sin; they were fallen off from God into variance among themselves. God would not restore them into their first order, in an immediate dependence on his divine perfections. He would no longer keep them in two distinct families; but he would, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, gather them up into one common head, on whom they should have their immediate dependence, and be reconciled again among themselves.

11. This *new head*, wherein God hath gathered up all things in heaven and earth into one, one body, one family, on whom is all their dependence, in whom they all now consist, is Jesus Christ the Son of God, incarnate. See 1 Cor. xi. 3; Eph. i. 22, 23. This glory was reserved for him; none other could be meet for it or worthy of it. See Col. i. 17–19.

12. To answer all the ends of this *new Head* of God's *re-collected* family, all power in heaven and earth, all fulness of grace and glory, is committed unto him. There is no communication from God, no act of rule towards this family, no supply of virtue, power, grace, or goodness unto angels or men, but what is immediately from this new head whereinto they are gathered. In him they all consist, on him do they depend, unto him are they subject; in their relation unto him doth their peace, union, and agreement among themselves consist. This is *the recapitulation of all things* intended by the apostle.

13. It is true that he acts distinctly and variously towards the two parts of the re-collected family of angels and men, according as their different states and conditions do require. For,—1. We had need of a reparation by redemption and grace, which the angels had not. 2. Angels were capable of immediate confirmation in glory, which we are not, until we come to heaven. Therefore,—1. He assumed our nature that it might be repaired, which he did not [by] the nature of the angels. 2. He gives us union unto himself by his Spirit, which exalts us into a dignity and honour meet for fellowship with them in the same family.

This is a brief account of the mysterious work of divine wisdom in the recapitulation of all things in Jesus Christ; and herein is he transcendently glorious, or his glory herein is far above our comprehension; yet some things may be observed, to direct us in the view and contemplation of it. As,—

1. He alone was a *meet and capable* subject of it. He alone could bear the weight of this glory. No mere creature in heaven or earth was meet to be thus made the head of the whole new creation of God. In none of them could all things consist. None of them was meet to be thus in the place of God, to have all things depend upon him, and be put in subjection unto him; so as that there should be no communication between God and the creation but by and through him

alone. Wherefore, when the Holy Ghost assigns this glory unto him, he so describes him as that we may discern his singular meetness for it; as, that he is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3;—that he is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, by whom all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 15–17. Such a one alone, and no other, was meet to bear and uphold this glory. And the glory of his person is such, as that it is the blessedness of all creatures to centre in this glory of his office.

2. This is that glory which God designed unto his only Son incarnate, and it gives us a little view into the glory of that mystery, the wonderful eternal design of God to glorify himself in the incarnation of Christ. God would have his eternal, his only-begotten Son to be incarnate, to take our nature on him,—to be made man. What is his design in this incomprehensible work of his wisdom, love, and power? Indeed, in the first place, it was for the redemption of the church, by the sacrifice of himself, and other acts of his mediation. But there is that which is more general and comprehensive, and wherein all the concerns of the glory of God do centre. And this was, that he might "gather all things into one" in him;—that the whole creation, especially that which was to be eternally blessed, should have a new head given unto it, for its sustentation, preservation, order, honour, and safety. All springs are in him, and all streams are unto him, and in and by him unto God. Who can express the divine beauty, order, and harmony of all things that are in this, their recapitulation in Christ? The union and communion between angels and men,—the order of the whole family in heaven and earth,—the communication of life, grace, power, mercy, and consolation to the church,—the rule and disposal of all things unto the glory of God,—do all depend hereon. This glory God designed unto his Son incarnate; and it was the greatest, the highest that could be communicated unto him. For, as the apostle observes, all things are put in subjection unto him, he only excepted who doth so make them subject; that is, God the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

There is no contemplation of the glory of Christ that ought more to affect the hearts of them that do believe with delight and joy, than this, of the recapitulation of all things in him. One view by faith of him in the place of God, as the supreme head of the whole creation, moving, acting, guiding, and disposing of it, will bring in spiritual refreshment unto a believing soul.

And it will do so the more, in that it gives a glorious representation of his divine nature also. For that any mere creature should thus be a head of life, motion, and power, as also of sovereign rule and disposal, of the whole new creation, with all things reduced into order thereby, is not only an impious, but a foolish imagination.

Did we live more in the contemplation of this glory of Christ, and of the wisdom of God in this recapitulation of all things in him, there is not anything of our duty which it would not mind us of, nor anything of privilege which it would not give us a sense of, as might easily be demonstrated.

3. In particular, the Lord Christ is glorious herein, in that the whole breach made on the glory of God in the creation, by the entrance of sin, is hereby repaired and made up. The beauty and order of the whole creation consisted in its dependence on God, by the obedience of the rational part of it, angels and men. Thereby were the being, the goodness, the wisdom, and power of God made manifest. But the beauty of this order was defaced, and the manifestation of the divine perfections unto the glory of God eclipsed, by the entrance of sin. But all is restored, repaired, and made up, in this recapitulation of all things in one new head,—Christ Jesus; yea, the whole curious frame of the divine creation is rendered more beautiful than it was before. Hence the whole of it groaneth for the interest of each part in this restoration of all things. Whatever there is of order, of beauty, of glory, in heaven above, or in earth beneath, it all ariseth from this new relation of the creation unto the Son of God. Whatever is not gathered into one, even in him, in its place, and according to its measure, is under darkness, disorder, and the curse. Hence the Jews have a saying, that "in the days of the Messiah all things shall be healed, but the serpent;" that is, the devil, and wicked men, which are as his seed.

4. He is glorious herein, in that he is appointed as the only means of exerting and expressing all the treasures of the infinite wisdom of God towards his creatures. The wisdom of God is absolutely, always, and in all things infinite. God doth not, God cannot, act with more wisdom in one thing than in another; as in the creation of man, than in that of any inanimate creatures. In the first creation, infinite wisdom was the inseparable companion of infinite power: "How marvellous are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all." But when the effects of this divine wisdom, in their principal beauty and glory, were defaced, greater treasures of wisdom were required unto their reparation. And in this re-collection of all things in Christ, did God lay them forth unto the utmost of whatever he will do in dealing with his creatures. So the apostle expresseth it, Eph. iii. 10, "To the intent that now, unto the principalities and

powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." By the recapitulation of all things into this one head, the manifold, various, unsearchable wisdom of God was made known unto the angels themselves. They knew not before of the design and work of God after the entrance of sin. These could not comprehend the wisdom that might repair that loss. They knew not that divine wisdom had another way to take herein; at least they knew not what way that should be. But hereby the manifold wisdom of God, his infinite wisdom in the treasures of it, able by various ways to attain the ends of his glory, was made known unto them. Herein—namely, in the re-collection of all things in Christ—divine wisdom hath made known and represented itself in all its stores and treasures unto angels and men. "In him are hid," and by him are displayed, "all the treasures of wisdom," Col. ii. 3. Herein is he glorious, and will be so to eternity.

5. He is glorious herein, in that hereby *firmness and security is communicated unto the whole new creation.* The first creation in its order was a curious and glorious fabric. But every thing depending immediately on God, by virtue of the principles of its own nature and the law of its obedience, all was brought unto a loss by the sin of angels and men. But now every thing that belongs unto this new creation, even every believer in the world, as well as the angels in heaven, being gathered together in this one head, the whole and all, and every part and member of it, even every particular believer, are secured from ruin, such as befell all things before. In this new Head they have an indissoluble consistency.

But *manum de tabula.* I shall insist on no more instances of this nature, which plentifully offer themselves in the Scripture unto us. For who can declare this glory of Christ? who can speak of these things as he ought? I am so far from designing to set forth the whole of it, that I am deeply sensible how little a portion I can comprehend of the least part of it. Nor can I attain unto any satisfaction in these Meditations, but what issues in an humble admiration.

CHAPTER XII.

Differences between our Beholding the Glory of Christ by Faith in this World and by Sight in Heaven—The First of them Explained.

"We walk" here "by faith, and not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7; that is, in the life of God, in our walking before him, in the whole of our obedience therein, we are under the conduct and influence of faith, and not of sight. Those are the two spiritual powers of our souls;—

by the one whereof we are made partakers of grace, holiness, and obedience in this life; and by the other, of eternal blessedness and glory.

Both these—namely, faith and sight, the one in this life, the other in that which is to come—have the same immediate object. For they are the abilities of the soul to go forth unto, and to embrace their object. Now, this object of them both is the glory of Christ, as hath been declared, as also what that glory is, and wherein it doth consist; wherefore my present design is to inquire into the difference that is between our beholding of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, and the vision which we shall have of the same glory hereafter.

The latter of these is peculiarly intended in that prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for his disciples, John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." But I shall not distinctly insist upon it, my design being another way, respecting principally the work of God in this life, and the privileges which we enjoy thereby. Yet I shall now take a short prospect of that also; not absolutely, but in the differences that are between faith and sight, or the view which we have of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, and that which they enjoy by vision who are above;—the object of them both being adequately the same.

But herein, also, I shall have respect only unto some of those things which concern our practice, or the present immediate exercise of faith. For I have elsewhere handled at large the state of the church above, or that of present glory, giving an account of the administration of the office of Christ in heaven, his presence among the glorified souls, and the adoration of God under his conduct. I have also declared the advantage which they have by being with him, and the prospect they have of his glory. Therefore these things must here be only touched on.

These differences may be referred unto two heads:—1. Those which arise from the different natures and actings of those means and instruments whereby we apprehend this glory of Christ,—namely, faith and vision; and, 2. Those that arise from the different effects produced by them. Instances in each kind shall be given.

1. The view which we have of the glory of Christ by faith in this world is obscure, dark, inevident, reflexive. So the apostle declares, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, "Now we see through a glass darkly," δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι;—"through" or by "a glass, in a riddle," a parable, a dark saying. There is a double figurative limitation put upon our view of the glory of Christ, taken from the two ways of our perception of what we apprehend,—namely, the sight of things, and the hearing of words.

The first is, that we have this view not directly, but reflexively and

by way of a representation, as in a glass. For I take the glass here, not to be optical or a prospective, which helps the sight, but a speculum, or a glass which reflects an image of what we do behold. It is a sight like that which we have of a man in a glass, when we see not his person or substance, but an image or representation of them only, which is imperfect.

The shadow or image of this glory of Christ is drawn in the Gospel, and therein we behold it as the likeness of a man represented unto us in a glass; and although it be obscure and imperfect in comparison of his own real, substantial glory, which is the object of vision in heaven, yet is it the only image and representation of himself which he hath left, and given unto us in this world. That woful, cursed invention of framing images of him out of stocks and stones, however adorned, or representations of him by the art of painting, are so far from presenting unto the minds of men any thing of his real glory, that nothing can be more effectual to divert their thoughts and apprehensions from it. But by this figurative expression of seeing in a glass, the apostle declares the comparative imperfection of our present view of the glory of Christ.

But the allusion may be taken from an optic glass or tube also,[1] whereby the sight of the eye is helped in beholding things at a great distance. By the aid of such glasses, men will discover stars or heavenly lights, which, by reason of their distance from us, the eye of itself is no way able to discern. And those which we do see are more fully represented, though remote enough from being so perfectly. Such a glass is the Gospel, without which we can make no discovery of Christ at all; but in the use of it we are far enough from beholding him in the just dimensions of his glory.

And he adds another intimation of this imperfection, in an allusion unto the way whereby things are proposed and conveyed unto the minds and apprehensions of men. Now this is by words. And these are either plain, proper, and direct, or dark, figurative, and parabolical. And this latter way makes the conception of things to be difficult and imperfect; and by reason of the imperfection of our view of the glory of Christ by faith in this world, the apostle saith it is in *αἰνίγματι*, in "a riddle." These *αἰνίγματα* the Psalmist calls חִידוֹת, "dark sayings," Ps. lxxviii. 2.

But here it must be observed, that the description and representation of the Lord Christ and his glory in the Gospel is not absolutely or in itself either dark or obscure; yea, it is perspicuous, plain, and direct. Christ is therein evidently set forth crucified, exalted, glorified. But the apostle doth not here discourse concerning the way or

[1] See note, p. 222 of this volume. Telescopes were not invented till the close of the sixteenth century.—Ed.

means of the revelation of it unto us, but of the means or instrument whereby we comprehend that revelation. This is our faith, which, as it is in us, being weak and imperfect, we comprehend the representation that is made unto us of the glory of Christ as men do the sense of a dark saying, a riddle, a parable; that is, imperfectly, and with difficulty.

On the account hereof we may say at present, How little a portion is it that we know of him! as Job speaks of God, chap. xxvi. 14. How imperfect are our conceptions of him! How weak are our minds in their management! There is no part of his glory that we can fully comprehend. And what we do comprehend,—as there is a comprehension in faith, Eph. iii. 18,—we cannot abide in the steady contemplation of. For ever blessed be that sovereign grace, whence it is that He who "commanded light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ," and therein of the glory of Christ himself;—that he hath so revealed him unto us, as that we may love him, admire him, and obey him: but constantly, steadily, and clearly to behold his glory in this life we are not able; "for we walk by faith, and not by sight."

Hence our sight of him here is as it were by glances,—liable to be clouded by many interpositions. "Behold, he standeth behind the wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing" (מְצִיץ, flourishing) "himself through the lattice," Cant. ii. 9. There is a great interposition between him and us, as a *wall;* and the means of the discovery of himself unto us, as through a window and lattice, include a great instability and imperfection in our view and apprehension of him. There is a wall between him and us, which yet he standeth behind. Our present mortal state is this wall, which must be demolished before we can see him as he is. In the meantime he looketh through the *windows* of the ordinances of the Gospel. He gives us sometimes, when he is pleased to stand in those windows, a view of himself; but it is imperfect, as is our sight of a man through a window. The appearances of him at these windows are full of refreshment unto the souls of them that do believe. But our view of them is imperfect, transient, and doth not abide;—we are for the most part quickly left to bemoan what we have lost. And then our best is but to cry, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before thee?" When wilt thou again give me to see thee, though but as through the windows? Alas! what distress do we ofttimes sit down in, after these views of Christ and his glory! But he proceeds farther yet; and flourishes himself through the lattices. This displaying of the glory of Christ, called the flourishing of himself,

is by the promises of the Gospel, as they are explained in the ministry of the Word. In them are represented unto us the desirable beauties and glories of Christ. How precious, how amiable is he, as represented in them! How are the souls of believers ravished with the views of them! Yet is this discovery of him also but as through a lattice. We see him but by parts,—unsteadily and unevenly.

Such, I say, is the sight of the glory of Christ which we have in this world by faith. It is dark,—it is but in part. It is but weak, transient, imperfect, partial. It is but little that we can at any time discover of it; it is but a little while that we can abide in the contemplation of what we do discover. "Rara hora, brevis mora." Sometimes it is unto us as the sun when it is under a cloud,—we cannot perceive it. When he hideth his face, who then can behold him? As Job speaks, so may we, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him," chap. xxiii. 8, 9. Which way soever we turn ourselves, and what duties soever we apply ourselves unto, we can obtain no distinct view of his glory. Yet, on the other hand, it is sometimes as the sun when it shines in its brightness, and we cannot bear the rays of it. In infinite condescension he says unto his church, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me," Cant. vi. 5,—as if he could not bear that overcoming affectionate love, which looks through the eyes of the church in its acting of faith on him. Ah! how much more do we find our souls overcome with his love, when at any time he is pleased to make any clear discoveries of his glory unto us!

Let us now, on the other hand, take a little consideration of that *vision* which we shall have of the same glory in heaven, that we may compare them together.

Vision, or the sight which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, is *immediate, direct, intuitive;* and therefore steady, even, and constant. And it is so on a double account:—1. Of the *object* which shall be proposed unto us; 2. Of the *visive power* or faculty wherewith we shall be endued: from the imperfection of both which in this world ariseth the imperfection of our view of the glory of Christ by faith, as hath been declared.

1. The *object* of it will be *real* and *substantial.* Christ himself, in his own person, with all his glory, shall be continually with us, before us, proposed unto us. We shall no longer have an image, a representation of him, such as is the delineation of his glory in the Gospel. We "shall see him," saith the apostle, "face to face," 1 Cor. xiii. 12; —which he opposeth unto our seeing him darkly as in a glass, which is the utmost that faith can attain to. "We shall see him as he is,"

1 John iii. 2;—not as now, in an imperfect description of him. As a man sees his neighbour when they stand and converse together face to face, so shall we see the Lord Christ in his glory; and not as Moses, who had only a transient sight of some parts of the glory of God, when he caused it to pass by him.

There will be use herein of our bodily eyes, as shall be declared. For, as Job says, in our flesh shall we see our Redeemer, and our eyes shall behold him, chap. xix. 25–27. That corporeal sense shall not be restored unto us, and that glorified above what we can conceive, but for this great use of the eternal beholding of Christ and his glory. Unto whom is it not a matter of rejoicing, that with the same eyes wherewith they see the tokens and signs of him in the sacrament of the supper, they shall behold himself immediately in his own person? But principally, as we shall see immediately, this vision is intellectual. It is not, therefore, the mere human nature of Christ that is the object of it, but his divine person, as that nature subsisteth therein. What is that perfection which we shall have (for that which is perfect must come and do away that which is in part) in the comprehension of the hypostatical union, I understand not; but this I know, that in the immediate beholding of the person of Christ, we shall see a glory in it a thousand times above what here we can conceive. The excellencies of infinite wisdom, love, and power therein, will be continually before us. And all the glories of the person of Christ which we have before weakly and faintly inquired into, will be in our sight for evermore.

Hence the ground and cause of our blessedness is, that "we shall ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17,—as himself prays, "that we may be with him where he is, to behold his glory." Here we have some dark views of it;—we cannot perfectly behold it, until we are with him where he is. Thereon our sight of him will be direct, intuitive, and constant.

There is a glory, there will be so, subjectively in us in the beholding of this glory of Christ, which is at present incomprehensible. For it doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be, 1 John iii. 2. Who can declare what a glory it will be in us to behold this glory of Christ? And how excellent, then, is that glory of Christ itself!

This immediate sight of Christ is that which all the saints of God in this life do breathe and pant after. Hence are they willing to be dissolved, or "desire to depart, that they may be with Christ," which is best for them, Phil. i. 23. They choose "to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8; or that they may enjoy the inexpressibly longed-for sight of Christ in his glory. Those who do not so long for it, whose souls and minds are not frequently visited with earnest desires after it, unto whom the thoughts of it are

not their relief in trouble, and their chiefest joy, are carnal, blind, and cannot see afar off. He that is truly spiritual entertains and refresheth himself with thoughts hereof continually.

2. It will be so from that visive power or faculty of beholding the glory of Christ which we shall then receive. Without this we cannot see him as he is. When he was transfigured in the mount, and had on his human nature some reflections of his divine glory, his disciples that were with him were rather amazed than refreshed by it, Matt. xvii. 6. They saw his glory, but spake thereon "they knew not what," Luke ix. 30–33. And the reason hereof was, because no man in this life can have a visive power, either spiritual or corporeal, directly and immediately to behold the real glory of Christ.

Should the Lord Jesus appear now to any of us in his majesty and glory, it would not be unto our edification nor consolation. For we are not meet nor able, by the power of any light or grace that we have received, or can receive, to bear the immediate appearance and representation of them. His beloved apostle John had leaned on his bosom probably many a time in his life, in the intimate familiarities of love; but when he afterward appeared unto him in his glory, "he fell at his feet as dead," Rev. i. 17. And when he appeared unto Paul, all the account he could give thereof was, "that he saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun;" whereon he, and all that were with him, "fell to the ground," Acts xxvi. 13, 14.

And this was one reason why, in the days of his ministry here on earth, his glory was veiled with the infirmities of the flesh, and all sorts of sufferings, as we have before related. The church in this life is no way meet, by the grace which it can be made partaker of, to converse with him in the immediate manifestations of his glory.

And therefore those who dream of his personal reign on the earth before the day of judgment, unless they suppose that all the saints shall be perfectly glorified also (which is only to bring down heaven to the earth for a while, to no purpose), provide not at all for the edification or consolation of the church. For no present grace, advanced unto the highest degree whereof in this world it is capable, can make us meet for an immediate converse with Christ in his unveiled glory.

How much more abominable is the folly of men, who would represent the Lord Christ in his present glory by *pictures* and *images* of him! When they have done their utmost with their burnished glass and gildings, an eye of flesh can not only behold it, but, if it be guided by reason, see it contemptible and foolish. But the true glory of Christ, neither inward nor outward sight can bear the rays of it in this life.

The dispensation which we are meet for is only that of his presence with us by his Spirit. We know him now no more after the flesh, 2 Cor. v. 16. We are advanced above that way and means of the knowledge of him by the fleshly, carnal ordinances of the Old Testament. And we know him not according unto that bodily presence of his which his disciples enjoyed in the days of his flesh. We have attained somewhat above that also. For such was the nature of his ministry here on earth, that there could not be the promised dispensation of the Spirit until that was finished. Therefore he tells his disciples that it was expedient for them that he should go away, and send the Spirit to them, John xvi. 7. Hereon they had a clearer view of the glory of Christ than they could have by beholding him in the flesh. This is our spiritual posture and condition. We are past the knowledge of him according to the flesh,—we cannot attain nor receive the sight of him in glory; but the life which we now lead is by the faith of the Son of God.

I shall not here inquire into the nature of this vision, or the power and ability which we shall have in heaven to behold the glory of Christ. Some few things may be mentioned, as it relates unto our minds, and our bodies also, after the resurrection.

1. For the mind, it shall be perfectly freed from all that darkness, unsteadiness, and other incapacities, which here it is accompanied with; and whereby it is weakened, hindered, and obstructed, in the exercise of faith. And they are of two sorts.

(1.) Such as are the remainders of that depravation of our natures which came upon us by sin. Hereby our minds became wholly vain, dark, and corrupt, as the Scripture testifieth,—utterly unable to discern spiritual things in a due manner. This is so far cured and removed in this life by grace, as that those who were darkness do become light in the Lord, or are enabled to live unto God under the conduct of a new spiritual light communicated unto them. But it is so cured and removed in part only, it is not perfectly abolished. Hence are all our remaining weaknesses and incapacities in discerning things spiritual and eternal, which we yet groan under, and long for deliverance from. No footsteps, no scars or marks that ever it had place in our minds shall abide in glory, Eph. v, 27. Nothing shall weaken, disturb, or incapacitate our souls, in acting all their powers, unimpeded by vanity, diversions, weakness, inability, upon their proper objects. The excellency hereof, in universal liberty and power, we cannot here comprehend; nor can we yet conceive the glory and beauty of those immixed spiritual actings of our minds which shall have no clog upon them, no encumbrance in them, no alloy of dross accompanying them. One pure act of spiritual sight in discerning the glory of Christ,—one pure act of love in cleaving unto God,—

will bring in more blessedness and satisfaction into our minds than in this world we are capable of.

(2.) There is an incapacity in our minds, as unto their actings on things spiritual and eternal, that is merely natural, from the posture wherein they are, and the figure which they are to make in this life. For they are here clothed with flesh, and that debased and corrupted. Now, in this state, though the mind act its conceptions by the body as its organ and instrument, yet is it variously straitened, encumbered, and impeded in the exercise of its native powers, especially towards things heavenly, by this prison of the flesh, wherein it is immured. There is an angelical excellency in the pure actings of the soul when delivered from all material instruments of them, or when they are all glorified and made suitable helps in its utmost spiritual activity. How and by what degrees our minds shall be freed from these obstructions in their beholding the glory of Christ shall be afterward declared.

2. Again, *a new light, the light* of glory, shall be implanted in them. There is a light in nature, which is the power of a man to discern the things of man ;—an ability to know, perceive, and judge of things natural. It is that "spirit of a man" which "is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly," Prov. xx. 27.

But by the light hereof no man can discern spiritual things in a due manner, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. ii. 11–15. Wherefore God gives a superior, a supernatural light, the light of faith and grace, unto them whom he effectually calls unto the knowledge of himself by Jesus Christ. He shines into their hearts, to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of his dear Son. Howbeit this new light doth not abolish, blot out, or render useless, the other light of nature, as the sun, when it riseth, extinguisheth the light of the stars; but it directs it and rectifies it as unto its principle, object, and end. Yet is it in itself a light quite of another nature. But he who hath only the former light can understand nothing of it, because he hath no taste or experience of its power and operations. He may talk of it, and make inquiries about it, but he knows it not.

Now, we have received this light of faith and grace, whereby we discern spiritual things, and behold the glory of Christ in the imperfect manner before described. But in heaven there shall be a superadded light of glory, which shall make the mind itself "shine as the firmament," Dan. xii. 3. I shall only say three things of it. 1. That as the *light of grace* doth not destroy or abolish the *light of nature*, but rectify and improve it, so *the light of glory* shall not abolish or destroy *the light of faith and grace*, but, by incorporating with it, render it absolutely perfect. 2. That as *by the light of nature* we cannot clearly comprehend the true nature and efficacy of *the light of grace*,

because it is of another kind, and is seen only in its own light; so by the *light of grace* we cannot absolutely comprehend this *light of glory*, being of a peculiar kind and nature, seen perfectly only by its own light. It doth not appear what we shall be. 3. That this is the best notion we can have of this *light of glory*,—that, in the first instance of its operation, it *perfectly transforms the soul into the image and likeness of Christ.*

This is the progress of our nature unto its rest and blessedness. The principles remaining in it concerning good and evil, with its practical convictions, are not destroyed but improved by grace; as its blindness, darkness, and enmity to God are in part taken away. Being renewed by grace, what it receives here of spiritual life and light shall never be destroyed, but be perfected in glory. Grace renews nature; glory perfects grace; and so the whole soul is brought unto its rest in God. We have an image of it in the blind man whom our Saviour cured, Mark viii. 22–24. He was absolutely blind,—born so, no doubt. Upon the first touch, his eyes were opened, and he saw, but very obscurely;—he saw men walking like trees. But on the second, he saw all things clearly. Our minds in themselves are absolutely blind. The first visitation of them by grace gives them a sight of things spiritual, heavenly, and eternal; but it is obscure and unsteady. The sight of glory makes all things clear and evident.

3. The body as glorified, with its senses, shall have its use and place herein. After we are clothed again with our flesh, we shall see our Redeemer with our eyes. We know not here what power and spirituality there will be in the acts of our glorified bodies. Such they will be as shall bear a part in eternal blessedness. Holy Stephen, the first martyr, took up somewhat of glory by anticipation before he died. For when he was brought to his trial before the council, all that sat therein, "looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as the face of an angel," Acts vi. 15. He had his transfiguration, according unto his measure, answerable unto that of our blessed Saviour in the mount. And by this initial beam of glory he received such a piercing vivacity and edge on his bodily eyes, that through all those inconceivable distances between the earth and the residence of the blessed, he looked steadfastly into heaven, and "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," Acts vii. 55, 56. Who, then, can declare what will be the power and acting of this sense of sight when perfectly glorified; or what sweetness and refreshment may be admitted into our souls thereby?

It was a privilege (who would not have longed to partake of it?) to have seen Him with our bodily eyes in the days of his flesh, as did the apostles and other his disciples. Howbeit he was not then glorified himself in the manifestation of his glory; nor they who saw him, in

the change or transformation of their nature. How great this privilege was, himself declares unto those that so saw him, Matt. xiii. 17, "Verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see;" whereunto we shall speak immediately. And if this were so excellent a privilege as that we cannot but congratulate them by whom it was enjoyed, how excellent, how glorious will it be, when with these eyes of ours, gloriously purified and strengthened beyond those of Stephen, we shall behold Christ himself immediately in the fulness of his glory! He alone perfectly understands the greatness and excellency hereof, who prayed his Father that those who "believe in him may be where he is, so to behold his glory."

These are some of the grounds of this first difference between our beholding the glory of Christ by faith here, and by immediate vision hereafter. Hence the one is weak, imperfect, obscure, reflexive; the other direct, immediate, even, and constant;—and we may stay a little in the contemplation of these things.

This view of the glory of Christ which we have now spoken unto, is that which we are breathing and panting after; that which the Lord Christ prays that we may arrive unto; that which the apostle testifies to be our best;—the best thing or state which our nature is capable of,—that which brings eternal rest and satisfaction unto our souls.

Here our souls are burdened with innumerable infirmities, and our faith is clogged in its operations by ignorance and darkness. This makes our best estate and highest attainments to be accompanied with groans for deliverance: "We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," Rom. viii. 23. Yea, whilst we are in this tabernacle, we groan earnestly, as being burdened, because we are not "absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 2, 4, 8. The more we grow in faith and spiritual light, the more sensible are we of our present burdens, and the more vehemently do we groan for deliverance into the perfect liberty of the sons of God. This is the posture of their minds who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit in the most eminent degree. The nearer any one is to heaven, the more earnestly he desires to be there, because Christ is there. For the more frequent and steady are our views of him by faith, the more do we long and groan for the removal of all obstructions and interpositions in our so doing. Now groaning is [the expression of] a vehement desire, mixed with sorrow, for the present want of what is desired. The desire hath sorrow, and that sorrow hath joy and refreshment in it;—like a shower that falls on a man in a garden in the spring; it wets him, but withal refresheth him with the savour it causeth in the flowers and herbs of the garden where

he is. And this groaning, which, when it is constant and habitual, is one of the choicest effects of faith in this life, respects what we would be delivered from, and what we would attain unto. The first is expressed, Rom. vii. 24, the other in the places now mentioned. And this frame, with an intermixture of some sighs from weariness by the troubles, sorrows, pains, sicknesses of this life, is the best we can here attain unto.

Alas! we cannot here think of Christ, but we are quickly ashamed of, and troubled at, our own thoughts; so confused are they, so unsteady, so imperfect. Commonly they issue in a groan or a sigh: Oh! when shall we come unto him? when shall we be ever with him? when shall we see him as he is? And if at any time he begins to give more than ordinary evidences and intimations of his glory and love unto our souls, we are not able to bear them, so as to give them any abiding residence in our minds. But ordinarily this trouble and groaning is amongst our best attainments in this world,—a trouble which, I pray God, I may never be delivered from, until deliverance do come at once from this state of mortality; yea, the good Lord increase this trouble more and more in all that believe.

The heart of a believer affected with the glory of Christ, is like the needle touched with the loadstone. It can no longer be quiet, no longer be satisfied in a distance from him. It is put into a continual motion towards him. This motion, indeed, is weak and tremulous. Pantings, breathings, sighings, groanings in prayer, in meditations, in the secret recesses of our minds, are the life of it. However, it is continually pressing towards him. But it obtains not its point, it comes not to its centre and rest, in this world.

But now above, all things are clear and serene,—all plain and evident in our beholding the glory of Christ;—we shall be ever with him, and see him as he is. This is heaven, this is blessedness, this is eternal rest.

The person of Christ in all his glory shall be continually before us; and the eyes of our understandings shall be so gloriously illuminated, as that we shall be able steadily to behold and comprehend that glory.

But, alas! here at present our minds recoil, our meditations fail, our hearts are overcome, our thoughts confused, and our eyes turn aside from the lustre of this glory; nor can we abide in the contemplation of it. But there, an immediate, constant view of it, will bring in everlasting refreshment and joy unto our whole souls.

This beholding of the glory of Christ given him by his Father, is, indeed, subordinate unto the ultimate vision of the essence of God. What that is we cannot well conceive; only we know that the "pure in heart shall see God." But it hath such an immediate connection

with it, and subordination unto it, as that without it we can never behold the face of God as the objective blessedness of our souls. For he is, and shall be to eternity, the only means of communication between God and the church.

And we may take some direction in our looking into and longing after this perfect view of the glory of Christ, from the example of the saints under the Old Testament. The sight which they had of the glory of Christ—for they also saw his glory through the obscurity of its revelation, and its being veiled with types and shadows—was weak and imperfect in the most illuminated believers; much inferior unto what we now have by faith, through the Gospel. Yet such it was as encouraged them to inquire and search diligently into what was revealed, 1 Peter i. 10, 11. Howbeit, their discoveries were but dark and confused, such as men have of things at a great distance, or "in a land that is very far off," as the prophet speaks, Isa. xxxiii. 17. And the continuance of this veil on the revelation of the glory of Christ, whilst a veil of ignorance and blindness was upon their hearts and minds, proved the ruin of that church in its apostasy, as the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 13, 14. This double veil (the covering covered, the veil veiled) God promised to take away, Isa. xxv. 7; and then shall they turn to the Lord, when they shall be able clearly to behold the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 16.

But this caused them who were real believers among them to desire, long, and pray for, the removal of these veils, the departure of those shadows, which made it as night unto them in comparison of what they knew would appear, when "the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing in his wings." They thought it long ere "the day did break, and the shadows flee away," Cant. ii. 17, iv. 6. There was an ἀποκαραδοκία, as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 19,—a thrusting forth of the head with desire and expectation of the exhibition of the Son of God in the flesh, and the accomplishment of all divine promises therein. Hence he was called the Lord whom they sought and delighted in, Mal. iii. 1.

And great was the spiritual wisdom of believers in those days. They rejoiced and gloried in the ordinances of divine worship which they did enjoy. They looked on them as their chiefest privilege, and attended unto them with diligence, as an effect of divine wisdom and love, as also because they had a shadow of good things to come. But yet, at the same time, they longed and desired that the time of reformation were come, wherein they should all be removed; that so they might behold and enjoy the good things signified by them. And those who did not so, but rested in and trusted unto their present institutions, were not accepted with God. Those who were really illuminated did not so, but lived in constant desires after the revelation of

the whole mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ; as did the angels themselves, 1 Peter i. 3; Eph. iii. 9, 10.

In this frame of heart and suitable actings of their souls, there was more of the power of true faith and love than is found among the most at this day. They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, Heb. xi. 13. They reached out the arms of their most intent affections to embrace the things that were promised. We have an instance of this frame in old Simeon, who, so soon as he had taken the child Jesus in his arms, cried out, "Now, Lord, let me depart," now let me die; this is that which my soul hath longed for, Luke ii. 28, 29.

Our present darkness and weakness in beholding the glory of Christ, is not like theirs. It is not occasioned by a veil of types and shadows, cast on it by the representative institutions of it,—it doth not arise from the want of a clear doctrinal revelation of the person and office of Christ; but, as was before declared, it proceedeth from two other causes. First, From the nature of faith itself, in comparison with vision. It is not able to look directly into this excellent glory, nor fully to comprehend it. Secondly, From the way of its proposal, which is not substantial of the thing itself, but only of an image of it, as in a glass. But the sight, the view of the glory of Christ, which we shall have in heaven, is much more above that which we now enjoy by the Gospel, than what we do or may so enjoy is above what they have attained under their types and shadows. There is a far greater distance between the vision of heaven and the sight which we have now by faith, than is between the sight which we now have and what they had under the Old Testament. Heaven doth more excel the Gospel state than that state doth the Law. Wherefore, if they did so pray, so long for, so desire the removal of their shadows and veils, that they might see what we now see, that they might so behold the glory of Christ as we may behold it in the light of the Gospel; how much more should we, if we have the same faith with them, the same love (which neither will nor can be satisfied without perfect fruition), long and pray for the removal of all weakness, of all darkness and interposition, that we may come unto that immediate beholding of his glory which he so earnestly prayed that we might be brought unto!

To sum up briefly what hath been spoken: There are three things to be considered concerning the glory of Christ, three degrees in its manifestation,—the *shadow*, the perfect *image*, and the *substance* itself. Those under the Law had only the shadow of it, and of the things that belong unto it;—they had not the perfect image of them, Heb. x. 1. Under the Gospel we have the perfect image, which they had not; or a clear, complete revelation and declaration of it, pre-

senting it unto us as in a glass: but the enjoyment of these things in their substance is reserved for heaven; we must be "where he is, that we may behold his glory." Now, there is a greater difference and distance between the real substance of any thing and the most perfect image of it, than there is between the most perfect image and the lowest shadow of the same thing. If, then, they longed to be freed from their state of types and shadows, to enjoy the representation of the glory of Christ in that image of it which is given us in the Gospel; much more ought we to breathe and pant after our deliverance from beholding it in the image of it, that we may enjoy the substance itself. For, whatever can be manifest of Christ on this side heaven, it is granted unto us for this end, that we may the more fervently desire to be present with him.

And as it was their wisdom and their grace to rejoice in the light they had, and in those typical administrations of divine worship which shadowed out the glory of Christ unto them, yet did always pant after that more excellent light and full discovery of it which was to be made by the Gospel; so it will be ours also thankfully to use and improve the revelations which we enjoy of it, and those institutions of worship wherein our faith is assisted in the view thereof,—yet so as continually to breathe after that perfect, that glorifying sight of it which is reserved for heaven above.

And may we not a little examine ourselves by these things? Do we esteem this pressing towards the perfect view of the glory of Christ to be our duty? and do we abide in the performance of it? If it be otherwise with any of us, it is a signal evidence that our profession is hypocritical. If Christ be in us, he is the hope of glory in us; and where that hope is, it will be active in desires of the things hoped for. Many love the world too well, and have their minds too much filled with the things of it, to entertain desires of speeding through it unto a state wherein they may behold the glory of Christ. They are at home, and are unwilling to be absent from the body, though to be present with the Lord. They hope, it may be, that such a season will come at one time or another, and then it will be the best they can look for when they can be here no more. But they have but a little sight of the glory of Christ in this world by faith, if any at all, who so little, so faintly desire to have the immediate sight of it above. I cannot understand how any man can walk with God as he ought, or hath that love for Jesus Christ which true faith will produce, or doth place his refreshments and joy in spiritual things, in things above, that doth not on all just occasions so meditate on the glory of Christ in heaven as to long for an admittance into the immediate sight of it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ alone perfectly understood wherein the

eternal blessedness of them that believe in him doth consist. And this is the sum of what he prays for with respect unto that end,—namely, that we may be where he is, to behold his glory. And is it not our duty to live in a continual desire of that which he prayed so earnestly that we might attain? If in ourselves we as yet apprehend but little of the glory, the excellency, the blessedness of it, yet ought we to repose that confidence in the wisdom and love of Christ, that it is our best,—infinitely better than any thing we can enjoy here below.

Unto those who are inured unto these contemplations, they are the salt of their lives, whereby every thing is condited and made savoury unto them, as we shall show afterward. And the want of spiritual diligence herein is that which hath brought forth a negligent, careless, worldly profession of religion, which, countenancing itself with some outward duties, hath lost out of it the power of faith and love in their principal operations. Hereby many deceive their own souls. Goods, lands, possessions, relations, trades, with secular interests in them, are the things whose image is drawn on their minds, and whose characters are written on their foreheads, as the titles whereby they may be known. As believers, beholding the glory of Christ in the blessed glass of the Gospel, are changed into the same image and likeness by the Spirit of the Lord; so these persons, beholding the beauty of the world and the things that are in it in the cursed glass of self-love, are in their minds changed into the same image. Hence perplexing fears, vain hopes, empty embraces of perishing things, fruitless desires, earthly, carnal designs, cursed, self-pleasing imaginations, feeding on, and being fed by, the love of the world and self, do abide and prevail in them. But we have not so learned Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Second Difference between our Beholding the Glory of Christ by Faith in this World and by Sight in Heaven.

Faith is the light wherein we behold the glory of Christ in this world. And this in its own nature, as unto this great end, is weak and imperfect, like weak eyes, that cannot behold the sun in its beauty. Hence our sight of it differs greatly from what we shall enjoy in glory, as hath been declared. But this is not all; it is frequently hindered and interrupted in its operations, or it loseth the view of its object by one means or other. As he who sees any thing at a great distance, sees it imperfectly, and the least interposition or motion takes it quite out of his sight, so is it with our faith in this matter; whence sometimes we can have little, sometimes no sight at all of the glory of

Christ by it. And this gives us, as we shall see, another difference between faith and sight.

Now, although the consideration hereof may seem a kind of diversion from our present argument, yet I choose to insist upon it, that I may evidence the reasons whence it is that many have so little experience of the things whereof we have treated,—that they find so little of reality or power in the exercise of this grace, or the performance of this duty. For it will appear in the issue, that the whole defect is in themselves;—the truth itself insisted on is great and efficacious.

Whilst we are in this life, the Lord Christ is pleased, in his sovereign wisdom, sometimes to withdraw, and, as it were, to hide himself from us. Then do our minds fall into clouds and darkness; faith is at a loss; we cannot behold his glory; yea, we may seek him, but cannot find him. So Job complains, as we observed before, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him," chap. xxiii. 8, 9. Which way soever I turn myself, whatever are my endeavours, in what way or work of his own I seek him, I cannot find him, I cannot see him,—I cannot behold his glory. So the church also complains, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour," Isa. xlv. 15; and the Psalmist, "How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?" Ps. lxxxix. 46. This hiding of the face of God is the hiding of the shining of his glory in the face of Christ Jesus, and therefore of the glory of Christ himself, for it is the glory of Christ to be the representative of the glory of God. The spouse in the Canticles is often at a loss, and herein bemoans herself, that her Beloved was withdrawn,—that she could neither find him nor see him, chap. iii. 1, 2, v. 6.

Men may retain their notions concerning Christ, his person and his glory. These cannot be blotted out of their minds but by heresy or obdurate stupidity. They may have the same doctrinal knowledge of him with others; but the sight of his glory doth not consist therein. They may abide in the outward performance of duties towards him as formerly; but yet all this while, as unto the especial gracious communications of himself unto their souls, and as unto a cheerful refreshing view of his glory, he may withdraw and hide himself from them.

As under the same outward dispensations of the Word he doth manifest himself unto some, and not unto others—("How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" John xiv. 22),—whereon they to whom he doth so manifest himself do see him to be beautiful, glorious, and lovely (for "unto them that believe, he is precious"); whilst the others see nothing hereof, but won-

der at them by whom he is admired, Cant. v. 9;—so, in the same dispensation of the Word he sometimes hides his face, turns away the light of his countenance, clouds the beams of his glory unto some, whilst others are cherished and warmed with them.

Two things we must here speak unto.

1. Why doth the Lord Christ, at any time, thus hide himself in his glory from the faith of believers, that they cannot behold him?

2. How we may perceive and know that he doth so withdraw himself from us, so that, however we may please ourselves, we do not indeed behold his glory.

1. As unto the first of these, though what he doth is supposed an act of sovereign, unaccountable wisdom, yet there are many holy ends of it, and consequently reasons for it. I shall mention one only. He doth it to stir us up in an eminent manner unto a diligent search and inquiry after him. Woful sloth and negligence are apt to prevail in us in our meditations on heavenly things. Though *our hearts wake* (as the spouse speaks, Cant. v. 2), in a valuation of Christ, his love, and his grace, yet *we sleep* as unto the due exercise of faith and love towards him. Who is it that can justify himself herein?—that can say, "My heart is pure, I am clean from this sin?" Yea, it is so far otherwise with many of us, that he is for ever to be admired in his patience,—that on the account of our unkindness and woful negligence herein, he hath not only withdrawn himself at seasons, but that he hath not utterly departed from us. Now, he knows that those with whom he hath been graciously present,—who have had views of his glory, although they have not valued the mercy and privilege of it as they ought, yet can they not bear a sense of his absence and his hiding himself from them. By this, therefore, will he awake them unto a diligent inquiry after him. Upon the discovery of his absence, and such a distance of his glory from them as their faith cannot reach unto it, they become like the doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity, and do stir up themselves to seek him early and with diligence. See Hosea v. 15. So wherever the spouse intimates this withdrawing of Christ from her, she immediately gives an account of her restless diligence and endeavours in her inquiries after him until she have found him, chap. iii. 1–4, v. 2–8. And in these inquiries there is such an exercise of faith and love, though it may be acting themselves mostly in sighs and groans, as is acceptable and well-pleasing to him.

We are like him in the parable of the prophet that spake unto Ahab, who having one committed unto him to keep, affirms that whilst he was busy here and there, he was gone. Christ commits himself unto us, and we ought carefully to keep his presence. "I held him," saith the church, "and would not let him go," Cant. iii. 4.

But whilst we are busy here and there, while our minds are overfilled with other things, he withdraws himself,—we cannot find him. But even this rebuke is a sanctified ordinance for our recovery, and his return unto us.

2. Our second inquiry is, how we may know when Christ doth so withdraw himself from us, that we do not, that we cannot, behold his glory.

I speak herein unto them alone who make this observation of the lively actings of faith and love in and towards Jesus Christ their chiefest concern in all their retirements, yea, in their whole walk before God. Concerning these, our inquiry is, how they may know when Christ doth in any degree or measure withdraw from them so as that they cannot in a due manner behold his glory.

And the first discovery hereof is by the consequents of such withdrawings. And what are the consequents of it we can know no otherwise but by the effects of his presence with us, and the manifestation of himself unto us; which, as unto some degrees, must necessarily cease thereon.

(1.) Now the first of these is the life, vigour, and effectual acting of all grace in us. This is an inseparable consequent and effect of a view of his glory. Whilst we enjoy it, *we live; nevertheless not we, but Christ liveth in us*, exciting and acting all his graces in us.

This is that which the apostle instructeth us in; while "we behold his glory as in a glass, we are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18;—that is, whilst by faith we contemplate on the glory of Christ as revealed in the Gospel, all grace will thrive and flourish in us towards a perfect conformity unto him. For whilst we abide in this view and contemplation, our souls will be preserved in holy frames, and in a continual exercise of love and delight, with all other spiritual affections towards him. It is impossible, whilst Christ is in the eye of our faith as proposed in the Gospel, but that we shall labour to be like him, and greatly love him. Neither is there any way for us to attain unto either of these, which are the great concernments of our souls,—namely, to be like unto Christ, and to love him,—but by a constant view of him and his glory by faith; which powerfully and effectually works them in us. All the doctrinal knowledge which we have of him is useless,—all the view we have of his glory is but fancy, imagination, or superstition, which are not accompanied with this transforming power. And that which is wrought by it, is the increase and vigour of all grace; for therein alone our conformity unto him doth consist. Growth in grace, holiness, and obedience, is a growing like unto Christ; and nothing else is so.

I cannot refrain here from a necessary short digression. This

transforming efficacy, from a spiritual view of Christ as proposed in the Gospel, being lost, as unto an experience of it, in the minds of men carnal and ignorant of the mystery of believing (as it is at present by many derided, though it be the life of religion), fancy and superstition provided various supplies in the room of it. For they found out crucifixes and images with paintings to represent him in his sufferings and glory. By these things, their carnal affections being excited by their outward senses, they suppose themselves to be affected with him, and to be like unto him. Yea, some have proceeded so far as, either by arts diabolical, or by other means, to make an appearance of wounds on their hands, and feet, and sides; therein pretending to be like him,—yea, to be wholly transformed into his image. But that which is produced by an image is but an image. An imaginary Christ will effect nothing in the minds of men but imaginary grace.

Thus religion was lost, and died. When men could not obtain any experience in their minds of the spiritual mysteries of the Gospel, nor be sensible of any spiritual change or advantage by them, they substituted some outward duties and observances in their stead; as I shall show, God willing, elsewhere more at large. These produced some kind of effects on their minds and affections, but quite of another nature than those which are the real effects of true evangelical grace. This is openly evident in this substitution of images instead of the representation of Christ and his glory made in the Gospel.

However, there is a general supposition granted on all hands,—namely, that there must be a *view of Christ* and his glory, to cause us to love him, and thereby to make us conformable or like unto him. But here lies the difference:—those of the Church of Rome say that this must be done by the beholding of crucifixes, with other images and pictures of him; and that with our bodily eyes: we say it is by our beholding his glory by faith, as revealed in the Gospel, and no otherwise. And, to confess the truth, we have some who, as they reject the use of images, so they despise that spiritual view of the glory of Christ which we inquire after. Such persons on the first occasion will fall on the other side; for anything is better than nothing.

But, as we have a sure word of prophecy to secure us from these abominations, by an express prohibition of such images unto all ends whatever; so, unto our stability in the profession of the truth, an experience of the efficacy of this spiritual view of Christ transforming our souls into his own likeness, is absolutely necessary. For if an idolater should plead, as they do all, that in the beholding of the image of Christ, or of a crucifix, especially if they are sedulous and constant therein, they find their affections unto him greatly excited, increased, and inflamed (as they will be, Isa. lvii. 5); and that hereon

he endeavours to be like unto him; what shall we have to oppose thereunto? For it is certain that such images are apt to make impressions on the minds of men; partly from the readiness of the senses and imagination to give them admittance into their thoughts; and partly from their natural inclinations unto superstition, their aversation from things spiritual and invisible, with an inclination unto things present and visible. Hence among them who are satisfied that they ought not to be adored with any religious veneration, yet some are apt, upon the sight of them, to entertain a thoughtful reverence, as they would do if they were to enter into a Pagan temple full of idols; and others are continually making approaches towards their use and veneration, in paintings, and altars, and such outward postures of worship as are used in the religious service of them. But that they do sensibly affect the minds of men carnal and superstitious, cannot be denied; and as they suppose, it is with a love unto Christ himself. However, certain it is in general, and confessed on all hands, that the beholding of Christ is the most blessed means of exciting all our graces, spiritualizing all our affections, and transforming our minds into his likeness. And if we have not another, and that a more excellent way of beholding him, than they have who behold him, as they suppose, in images and crucifixes, they would seem to have the advantage of us; for their minds will really be affected with somewhat, ours with nothing at all. And by the pretence thereof, they inveigle the carnal affections of men ignorant of the power of the Gospel, to become their proselytes. For having lived, it may be, a long time without any the least experience of a sensible impression on their minds, or a transforming power from the representation of Christ in the Gospel, upon their very first religious, devout application unto these images, they find their thoughts exercised, their minds affected, and some present change made upon them.

But there was a difference between the person of David and an image with a bolster of goat's hair, though the one were laid in the room and place of the other; and there is so between Christ and an image, though the one be put into the place of the other. Neither do these things serve unto any other end, but to divert the minds of men from faith and love to Christ;—giving them some such satisfactions in the room of them, as that their carnal affections do cleave unto their idols. And indeed it doth belong unto the wisdom of faith, or we stand in need of spiritual light, to discern and judge between the working of natural affections towards spiritual objects, on undue motives, by undue means, with indirect ends,—wherein all Papal devotion consists,—and the spiritual exercise of grace in those affections duly fixed on spiritual objects.

But, as was said, it is a real experience of the efficacy that there is

in the spiritual beholding of the glory of Christ by faith, as proposed in the Gospel, to strengthen, increase, and excite all grace unto its proper exercise, so changing and transforming the soul gradually into his likeness, which must secure us against all those pretences; and so I return from this digression.

Hereby we may understand whether the Lord Christ doth so withdraw himself as that we do not, as that we cannot, behold his glory by faith in a due manner;—which is the thing inquired after. For if we grow *weak in our graces,* unspiritual in our frames, cold in our affections, or negligent in the exercise of them by holy meditation, it is evident that he is at a great distance from us, so as that we do not behold his glory as we ought. If the weather grow cold, herbs and plants do wither, and the frost begins to bind up the earth, all men grant that the sun is withdrawn, and makes not his wonted approach unto us. And if it be so with our hearts, that they grow cold, frozen, withering, lifeless, in and unto spiritual duties, it is certain that the Lord Christ is in some sense withdrawn, and that we do not behold his glory. We retain notions of truth concerning his person, office, and grace; but faith is not in constant exercise as to real views of him and his glory. For there is nothing more certain in Christian experience than this is, that while we do really by faith behold the glory of Christ, as proposed in the Gospel, the glory of his person and office, as before described, and so abide in holy thoughts and meditations thereof, especially in our private duties and retirements, all grace will live and thrive in us in some measure, especially love unto his person, and therein unto all that belongs unto him. Let us but put it to the trial, and we shall infallibly find the promised event.

Do any of us find *decays in grace* prevailing in us;—deadness, coldness, lukewarmness, a kind of spiritual stupidity and senselessness coming upon us? Do we find an unreadiness unto the exercise of grace in its proper season, and the vigorous acting of it in duties of communion with God? and would we have our souls recovered from these dangerous diseases? Let us assure ourselves there is no better way for our healing and deliverance, yea, no other way but this alone,—namely, the obtaining a fresh view of the glory of Christ by faith, and a steady abiding therein. Constant contemplation of Christ and his glory, putting forth its transforming power unto the revival of all grace, is the only relief in this case; as shall farther be showed afterward.

Some will say, that this must be effected by *fresh supplies and renewed communications of the Holy Spirit.* Unless he fall as dew and showers on our dry and barren hearts,—unless he cause our graces to spring, thrive, and bring forth fruit,—unless he revive and

increase faith, love, and holiness in our souls,—our backslidings will not be healed, nor our spiritual state be recovered. Unto this end is he prayed for and promised in the Scripture. See Cant. iv. 16; Isa. xliv. 3, 4; Ezek. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26; Hos. xiv. 5, 6. And so it is. The immediate efficiency of the revival of our souls is from and by the Holy Spirit. But the inquiry is, in what way, or by what means, we may obtain the supplies and communications of him unto this end. This the apostle declares in the place insisted on: We, beholding the glory of Christ in a glass, "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord." It is in the exercise of faith on Christ, in the way before described, that the Holy Spirit puts forth his renewing, transforming power in and upon our souls. This, therefore, is that alone which will retrieve Christians from their present decays and deadness.

Some *complain* greatly of their state and condition; none so dead, so dull and stupid as they;—they know not whether they have any spark of heavenly life left in them. Some make weak and faint endeavours for a recovery, which are like the attempts of a man in a dream, wherein he seems to use great endeavours without any success. Some put themselves unto multiplied duties. Howbeit, the generality of professors seem to be in a pining, thriftless condition. And the reason of it is, because they will not sincerely and constantly make use of the only remedy and relief; like a man that will rather choose to pine away in his sickness with some useless, transient refreshments, than apply himself unto a known and approved remedy, because, it may be, the use of it is unsuited unto some of his present occasions. Now this is, to live in the exercise of faith in Christ Jesus. This himself assures us of, John xv. 4, 5, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

There is a twofold *coming unto Christ* by believing. The first is that we may have life;—that is, a spring and principle of spiritual life communicated unto us from him: for he is "our life," Col. iii. 4, and "because he liveth, we live also," John xiv. 19. Yea, it is not so much we that live, as he liveth in us, Gal. ii. 19, 20. And unbelief is a *not coming unto him*, that we may have life, John v. 40. But, secondly, there is also a coming unto him by believers in the actual exercise of faith, that they may "have this life more abundantly," John x. 10; that is, such supplies of grace as may keep their souls in a healthy, vigorous acting of all the powers of spiritual life. And as he reproacheth some that they would not come unto him that they might have life, so he may justly reprove us all, that we do not

so come unto him in the actual exercise of faith, as that we might have this life more abundantly.

(2.) When the Lord Christ is near us, and we do behold his glory, he will frequently communicate *spiritual refreshment* in peace, consolation, and joy unto our souls. We shall not only hereby have our graces excited with respect unto him as their object, but be made sensible of his actings toward us in the communications of himself and his love unto us. When the Sun of Righteousness ariseth on any soul, or makes any near approach thereunto, it shall find "healing under his wings;"—his beams of grace shall convey by his Spirit holy spiritual refreshment thereunto. For he is present with us by his Spirit, and these are his fruits and effects, as he is the Comforter, suited unto his office, as he is promised unto us.

Many love to walk in a very careless, unwise profession. So long as they can hold out in the performance of outward duties, they are very regardless of the greatest evangelical privileges,—of those things which are the marrow of divine promises,—all real endeavours of a vital communion with Christ. Such are spiritual peace, refreshing consolations, ineffable joys, and the blessed composure of assurance. Without some taste and experience of these things, profession is heartless, lifeless, useless; and religion itself a dead carcase without an animating soul. The peace which some enjoy is a mere stupidity. They judge not these things to be real which are the substance of Christ's present reward; and a renunciation whereof would deprive the church of its principal supportments and encouragements in all its sufferings. It is a great evidence of the power of unbelief, when we can satisfy ourselves without an experience in our own hearts of the great things, in this kind of joy, peace, consolation, assurance, that are promised in the Gospel. For how can it be supposed that we do indeed believe the promises of things future,—namely, of heaven, immortality, and glory, the faith whereof is the foundation of all religion,—when we do not believe the promises of the present reward in these spiritual privileges? And how shall we be thought to believe them, when we do not endeavour after an experience of the things themselves in our own souls, but are even contented without them? But herein men deceive themselves. They would very desirously have evangelical joy, peace, and assurance, to countenance them in their evil frames and careless walking. And some have attempted to reconcile these things, unto the ruin of their souls. But it will not be. Without the diligent exercise of the grace of obedience, we shall never enjoy the grace of consolation. But we must speak somewhat of these things afterward.

It is peculiarly in the view of the glory of Christ, in his approaches unto us, and abiding with us, that we are made partakers of evangelical peace, consolation, joy, and assurance. These are a part of the

royal train of his graces, of the reward wherewith he is accompanied. "His reward is with him." Wherever he is graciously present with any, these things are never wanting in a due measure and degree, unless it be by their own fault, or for their trial. In these things doth he give the church of his loves, Cant. vii. 12. "For if any man," saith he, "love me, I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him," John xiv. 21;—"yea, I and the Father will come unto him, and make our abode with him," verse 23; and that so as to "sup with him," Rev. iii. 20;—which, on his part, can be only by the communication of those spiritual refreshments. The only inquiry is, by what way and means we do receive them? Now, I say this is in and by our beholding of the glory of Christ by faith, 1 Peter i. 8, 9. Let that glory be rightly stated, as before laid down,—the glory of his person, his office, his condescension, exaltation, love, and grace; let faith be fixed in a view and contemplation of it, mix itself with it, as represented in the glass of the Gospel, meditate upon it, embrace it,—and virtue will proceed from Christ, communicating spiritual, supernatural refreshment and joy unto our souls. Yea, in ordinary cases, it is impossible that believers should have a real prospect of this glory at any time, but that it will in some measure affect their hearts with a sense of his love; which is the spring of all consolation in them. In the exercise of faith on the discoveries of the glory of Christ made unto us in the Gospel, no man shall ever totally want such intimations of his love, yea, such effusions of it in his heart, as shall be a living spring of those spiritual refreshments, John iv. 14; Rom. v. 5. When, therefore, we lose these things, as unto a sense of them in our souls, it is evident that the Lord Christ is withdrawn, and that we do not behold his glory.

But I cannot here avoid another short digression. There are those by whom all these things are derided as distempered fancies and imaginations; yea, such things have been spoken and written of them as contain a virtual renunciation of the Gospel, the powers of the world to come, and the whole work of the Holy Ghost as the comforter of the church. And hereby all real intercourse between the person of Christ and the souls of them that do believe is utterly overthrown;—reducing all religion to an outward show, and a pageantry fitter for a stage than that temple of God which is in the minds of men. According unto the sentiments of these profane scoffers, there is no such thing as the *shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts* by the Holy Ghost, nor as the *witnessing of the Spirit of God with our spirits* that we are the children of God, from which these spiritual joys and refreshments are inseparable as their necessary effects;—no such thing as the lifting up of the light of God's countenance upon us, which will put gladness into our hearts, that glad-

ness which compriseth all the things mentioned;—no such thing as rejoicing upon "believing, with joy unspeakable and full of glory;"—no such thing as Christ's showing and manifesting himself unto us, supping with us, and giving us of his loves;—that the divine promises of a "feast of fat things, and wine well refined," in gospel mercies, are empty and insignificant words;—that all those ravishing joys and exultations of spirit that multitudes of faithful martyrs of old and in later ages have enjoyed, by a view of the glory of God in Christ and a sense of his love, whereunto they gave testimony unto their last moments in the midst of their torments, were but fancies and imaginations. But it is the height of impudence in these profane scoffers, that they proclaim their own ignorance of those things which are the real powers of our religion.

Others there are who will not deny the truth of these things. They dare not rise up in contradiction unto those express testimonies of the Scripture wherewith they are confirmed. And they do suppose that some are partakers of them, at least there were so formerly; but as for their parts, they have no experience of them, nor do judge it their duty to endeavour after it. They can make a shift to live on hopes of heaven and future glory; as unto what is present, they desire no more, but to be found in the performance of some duties in answer unto their convictions,—which gives them that sorry peace which they do enjoy. So do many countenance themselves in their spiritual sloth and unbelief, keeping themselves at liberty to seek for refreshment and satisfaction in other things, whilst those of the Gospel are despised. And these things are inconsistent. While men look for their chief refreshment and satisfaction in temporal things, it is impossible they should seek after those that are spiritual in a due manner. And it must be confessed, that when we have a due regard unto spiritual, evangelical consolations and joys, it will abate and take off our affections unto, and satisfaction in, present enjoyments, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

But there is no more sacred truth than this, that where Christ is present with believers,—where he is not withdrawn for a season from them, where they live in the view of his glory by faith as it is proposed unto them in the Gospel,—he will give unto them, at his own seasons, such intimations of his love, such supplies of his Spirit, such holy joys and rejoicings, such repose of soul in assurance, as shall refresh their souls, fill them with joy, satisfy them with spiritual delight, and quicken them unto all acts of holy communion with himself.

Let no such dishonour be reflected on the Gospel, that whereas the faith of it, and obedience unto it, are usually accompanied with outward troubles, afflictions, persecution, and reproaches, as we are foretold they should be,—that it doth not, by its inward consolations and divine refreshments, outbalance all those evils which we may undergo upon

the account of it. So to suppose, is expressly contrary to the promise of Christ himself, who hath assured us that even νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ, "even now in this life," in this world, distinct from eternal life in the world to come, we shall receive a hundred-fold recompense for all that we can lose or suffer for his sake, Mark x. 30;—as also unto the experience of them who, in all ages, have "taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, as knowing in themselves" (by the experience which they have of its first-fruits) that they "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance," Heb. x. 34. If we come short in a participation of these things, if we are strangers unto them, the blame is to be laid on ourselves alone, as it shall be immediately declared.

Now, the design of the Lord Christ, in thus withdrawing himself from us, and hiding his glory from our view, being the exercise of our graces, and to stir us up unto diligence in our inquiries after him, here lieth our guidance and direction in this case. Do we find ourselves lifeless in the spiritual duties of religion? Are we strangers unto the heavenly visits of consolation and joys,—those visitations of God whereby he preserves our souls? Do we seldom enjoy a sense of the "shedding abroad of his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost?" We have no way of recovery but this alone,—to this "strong tower" must we turn ourselves as "prisoners of hope,"—unto Christ must we look, that we may be saved. It is a steady view or contemplation of his glory by faith alone that will bring in all these things in a lively experience into our hearts and souls.

Again, in the second place, it is from ourselves principally, if we lose the view of the glory of Christ, and the exercise of faith be obstructed therein. All our spiritual disadvantages do arise from ourselves. It is the remainder of lusts and corruptions in us, either indulged by sloth and negligence or excited and inflamed by Satan's temptations, that do obstruct us in this duty. Whilst they are in any disorder or disturbance, it is in vain for us to expect any clear view of this glory.

That view of the glory of Christ whereof we treat consists in two things,—namely, its especial *nature*, and its necessary adjunct or *effect*. The first is, *a spiritual perception* or understanding of it as revealed in the Scriptures. For the revelation of the glory of his person, office, and grace, is the principal subject of them, and the principal object of our faith. And the other consists in multiplied thoughts about him, with actings of faith, in love, trust, delight, and longing after the full enjoyment of him, 1 Peter i. 8. If we satisfy ourselves in mere notions and speculations about the glory of Christ as doctrinally revealed unto us, we shall find no transforming power or efficacy communicated unto us thereby. But when, under the conduct of that

spiritual light, our affections do cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, our minds are filled with the thoughts of him and delight in him, and faith is kept up unto its constant exercise in trust and affiance on him,—virtue will proceed from him to purify our hearts, increase our holiness, strengthen our graces, and to fill us sometimes "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is the just temperature of a state of spiritual health,—namely, when our light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ doth answer the means of it which we enjoy, and when our affections unto Christ do hold proportion unto that light; and this according unto the various degrees of it,—for some have more, and some have less. Where light leaves the affections behind, it ends in formality or atheism; and where affections outrun light, they sink in the bog of superstition, doting on images and pictures, or the like. But where things go not into these excesses, it is better that our affections exceed our light from the defect of our understandings, than that our light exceed our affections from the corruption of our wills. In both these is the exercise of faith frequently interrupted and obstructed by the remainder of corruption in us, especially if not kept constantly under the discipline of mortification, but some way indulged unto. For,—

First, The *steam of their disorder* will cloud and darken the understanding, that it shall not be able clearly to discern any spiritual object,—least of all the greatest of them. There is nothing more acknowledged, even in things natural and moral, than that the disorder of the passions and affections will blind, darken, and deceive the mind in its operations. And it is much more so in things spiritual, wherein that disorder is an immediate rebellion against its proper conducting light; that is, against the light and rule of grace.

There are three sorts of them unto whom the gospel is preached, in whom there are various obstructions of this view.

1. There is in obstinate unbelievers a darkness, that is an effect of the power of Satan on their minds, in blinding them, which makes it impossible for them to behold any thing of the glory of Christ. So the apostle declares it, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Of these we do not speak.

2. There is in all men a corrupt, natural darkness; or such a depravation of their minds by nature, as that they cannot discern this glory of Christ in a due manner. Hence "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not," John i. 5. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they

are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Hence it is, that although Christ be preached among us continually, yet there are very few who discern any glory or beauty in him for which he should be desired, as the prophet complains, Isa. liii. 1, 2. But I speak not of this natural darkness in general. But even these persons have their minds filled with prejudices against the Gospel, and darkened as unto the glory of Christ, according as corrupt lusts and affections are prevalent in them. See John i. 46, xii. 43. Hence is the difference that is among the common hearers of the Word. For although no man can do any thing of himself for the receiving of Christ and the beholding of his glory, without the especial aid of the grace of God (Matt. xi. 25; John vi. 44, 45), yet some may make more opposition unto believing, and lay more hinderances in their own way, than others; which is done by their lusts and corruptions.

3. There are those in whom both these evils are cured by faith, wherein the eyes of our understandings are enlightened to perceive and discern spiritual things, Eph. i. 16–18. But this cure is wrought in this life but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And in this cure, by a supply of a principle of saving light unto our minds, there are many degrees. For some have a clearer light than others, and thereby a more clear discerning of the mystery of the wisdom of God, and of the glory of Christ therein. But whatever be our attainments herein, that which obstructs this light, which hinders it from shining in a due manner, —*that* obstructs and hinders faith in its view of the glory of Christ. And this is done by the remainders of corrupted nature in us, when they act in any prevalent degree. For they darken the mind, and weaken it in its spiritual operations. That is, where any corrupt and inordinate affections, as love of the world, cares about it, inclinations unto sensuality, or the like spiritual disorders, do prevail, faith is weakened in its spiritual acts, especially in discerning and beholding the glory of Christ. For the mind is rendered unsteady in its inquiries after it, being continually distracted and diverted with vain thoughts and imaginations.

Persons under the power of such distempers may have the same doctrinal knowledge of the person of Christ, his office, and his grace, with other men, and the same evidence of its truth fixed on their minds; but when they endeavour a real intuition into the things themselves, all things are dark and confused unto them, from the uncertainty and instability of their own minds.

This is the sum of what I do design. We have by faith a view of the glory of Christ. This view is weak and unsteady, from the nature of faith itself, and the way of its proposal unto us—as in a glass, in comparison of what by sight we shall attain unto. But, moreover, where corrupt lusts or inordinate affections are indulged

unto, where they are not continually mortified, where any one sin hath a perplexing prevalency in the mind, faith will be so far weakened thereby, as that it can neither see nor meditate upon this glory of Christ in a due manner. This is the reason why the most are so weak and unstable in the performance of this duty; yea, are almost utterly unacquainted with it. The light of faith in the minds of men being impaired, clouded, darkened, by the prevalency of unmortified lusts, it cannot make such discoveries of this glory as otherwise it would do. And this makes the preaching of Christ unto many so unprofitable as it is.

Secondly, In the view of the glory of Christ which we have by faith, it will fill the mind with thoughts and meditations about him, whereon the affections will cleave unto him with delight. This, as was said, is inseparable from a spiritual view of his glory in its due exercise. Every one that hath it, must and will have many thoughts concerning, and great affections to him. See the description of these things, Phil. iii. 8–10. It is not possible, I say, that we should behold the glory of his person, office, and grace, with a due conviction of our concernment and interest therein, but that our minds will be greatly affected with it, and be filled with contemplations about it. Where it is not so with any, it is to be feared that they "have not heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape," whatever they profess. A spiritual sight of Christ will assuredly produce love unto him; and if any man love him not, he never saw him,—he knows him not at all. And that is no love which doth not beget in us many thoughts of the object beloved. He, therefore, who is partaker of this grace, will think much of what Christ is in himself,—of what he hath done for us,—of his love and condescension,—of the manifestation of all the glorious excellencies of the divine nature in him, exerted in a way of infinite wisdom and goodness for the salvation of the church. Thoughts and meditations of these things will abound in us, if we are not wanting unto the due exercise of faith; and intense, inflamed affections unto him will ensue thereon; at least they will be active unto our own refreshing experience. And where these things are not in reality (though in some they may be only in a mean and low degree), men do but deceive their own souls in hopes of any benefit by Christ or the Gospel.

This, therefore, is the present case:—Where there are prevailing sinful distempers or inordinate affections in the mind, such as those before mentioned,—as self-love, love of the world, cares and fears about it, with an excessive valuation of relations and enjoyments,—they will so far cumber and perplex it with a multitude of thoughts about their own objects, as shall leave no place for sedate meditations on Christ and his glory. And where the thoughts are engaged, the affections,

which partly excite them and partly are led by them, will be fixed also," Col. iii. 1, 2.

This is that which, in the most, greatly promoteth that imperfection which is in our view of the glory of Christ by faith, in this life. According to the proportion and degree of the prevalency of affections, corrupt, earthly, selfish, or sensual, filling the heads and hearts of men with a multitude of thoughts about what they are fixed on or inclined unto; so is faith obstructed and weakened in this work and duty.

Wherefore, whereas there is a remainder of these lusts, as to the seeds of them, in us all,—though more mortified in some than in others, yet having the same effects in the minds of all, according to the degree of their remainder,—thence it is, as from an efficacious cause of it, that our view of the glory of Christ by faith is in many so weak, imperfect, and unsteady.

THIRDLY, We have interruption given unto the work of faith herein by the *temptations* of Satan. His original great design, wherever the gospel is preached, is to blind the eyes of men, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them, or irradiate their minds, 2 Cor. iv. 4. And herein he prevails unto astonishment. Let the light of the gospel in the preaching of the Word be never so glorious, yet, by various means and artifices, he blinds the minds of the most, that they shall not behold any thing of the glory of Christ therein. By this means he continues his rule in the children of disobedience. With respect unto the elect, God overpowers him herein. He shines into their hearts, to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ Jesus, verse 6. Yet will not Satan so give over. He will endeavour by all ways and means to trouble, discompose, and darken the minds even of them that believe, so as that they shall not be able to retain clear and distinct views of this glory. And this he doth in two ways.

1. With some he employs all his engines, useth all his methods of serpentine subtlety, and casts in his fiery darts, so to disquiet, discompose, and deject them, as that they can retain no comfortable views of Christ or his glory. Hence arise fears, doubts, disputes, uncertainties, with various disconsolations. Hereon they cannot apprehend the love of Christ, nor be sensible of any interest they have therein, or any refreshing persuasions that they are accepted with him. If such things sometimes shine and beam into their minds, yet they quickly vanish and disappear. Fears that they are rejected and cast off by him, that he will not receive them here nor hereafter, do come in their place; hence are they filled with anxieties and despondencies, under which it is impossible they should have any clear view of his glory.

I know that ignorance, atheism, and obstinate security in sensual sins, do combine to despise all these things. But it is no new thing in the world, that men outwardly professing Christian religion, when they find gain in that godliness, should speak evil of the things which they know not, and corrupt themselves in what they know naturally, as brute beasts.

2. With others he deals after another manner. By various means he seduceth them into a careless security, wherein they promise peace unto themselves without any diligent search into these things. Hereon they live in a general presumption that they shall be saved by Christ, although they know not how. This makes the apostle so earnest in pressing the duty of self-examination on all Christians, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" The rule of self-judging prescribed by him is, whether Christ be in us or no; and in us he cannot be, unless he be received by that faith wherewith we behold his glory. For by faith we receive him, and by faith he dwelleth in our hearts, John i. 12; Eph. iii. 17.

This is the principal way of his prevailing in the world. Multitudes by his seduction live in great security under the utmost neglect of these things. Security is granted to be an evil destructive of the souls of men; but then it is supposed to consist only in impenitency for great and open sins: but to be neglective of endeavouring an experience of the power and grace of the gospel in our own souls, under a profession of religion, is no less destructive and pernicious than impenitency in any course of sin.

These and the like obstructions unto faith in its operations being added unto its own imperfections, are another cause whence our view of the glory of Christ in this world is weak and unsteady; so that, for the most part, it doth but transiently affect our minds, and not so fully transform them into his likeness as otherwise it would.

It is now time to consider that sight which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, in comparison of that which we have here below. Now this is equal, stable, always the same,—without interruption or diversion. And this is evident, both in the causes or means of it, as also in our perfect deliverance from every thing that might be a hinderance in it, or an obstruction unto it.

1. We may consider the *state of our minds in glory.* The faculties of our souls shall then be made perfect, Heb. xii. 23, "The spirits of just men made perfect." (1.) Freed from all the clogs of the flesh, and all its influence upon them, and restraint of their powers in their operations. (2.) Perfectly purified from all principles of instability and variety,—of all inclinations unto things sensual and car-

nal, and all contrivances of self-preservation or advancement,—being wholly transformed into the image of God in spirituality and holiness. And to take in the state of our bodies after the resurrection; even they also, in all their powers and senses, shall be made entirely subservient unto the most spiritual actings of our minds in their highest elevation by the light of glory. Hereby shall we be enabled and fitted eternally to abide in the contemplation of the glory of Christ with joy and satisfaction. The understanding shall be always perfected with the vision of God, and the affections cleave inseparably to him;—which is blessedness.

The very *essential faculties* of our souls, in that way and manner of working which, by their union with our bodies, they are confined unto, are not able to comprehend and abide constantly in the contemplation of this glory. So that, though our sight of it here be dim and imperfect, and the proposal of it obscure; yet, from the weakness of our minds, we are forced sometimes to turn aside from what we do discern, as we do our bodily eyes from the beams of the sun when it shines in its brightness. But in this perfect state they are able to behold and delight in this glory constantly with eternal satisfaction.

But "as for me," saith David, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," Ps. xvii. 15. It is Christ alone who is the likeness and image of God. When we awake in the other world, with our minds purified and rectified, the beholding of him shall be always satisfying unto us. There will be then no satiety, no weariness, no indispositions; but the mind, being made perfect in all its faculties, powers, and operations, with respect unto its utmost end, which is the enjoyment of God, is satisfied in the beholding of him for evermore. And where there is perfect satisfaction without satiety, there is blessedness for ever. So the Holy Spirit affirms of the four living creatures, in the Revelation, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," chap. iv. 8. They are continually exercised in the admiration and praises of God in Christ without weariness or interruption. Herein shall we be made like unto angels.

2. As our minds, in their essential powers and faculties, shall be enabled to comprehend and acquiesce in this glory of Christ; so the means or instrument of the beholding of it is much more excellent than faith, and in its kind absolutely perfect; as hath in part been before declared. This is vision or sight. Here we walk by faith; there, by sight. And this sight is not an external aid, like a glass helping the weakness of the visive faculty to see things afar off; but it is an internal power, or an act of the internal power of our minds, wherewith they are endowed in a glorified state. Hereby we shall be able to "see him face to face,—to see him as he is," in a direct comprehen-

sion of his glory; for this sight or visive power shall be given us for this very end,—namely, to enable us so to do. Hereunto the whole glory of Christ is clear, perspicuous, and evident; which will give us eternal acquiescency therein. Hence shall our sight of the glory of Christ be invariable and always the same.

3. The Lord Christ will never, in *any one instance, on any occasion*, so much as one moment, *withdraw himself* from us, or eclipse the proposal and manifestation of himself unto our sight. This he doth sometimes in this life; and it is needful for us that so he should do. "We shall ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17,—without end, without interruption. This is the centre of good and evil as to the future different states of men. They shall be for ever. Eternity makes them absolutely good on the one hand, and absolutely evil on the other. To be in hell under the wrath of God is in itself the greatest penal evil; but to be there for ever, without the intermission of misery or determination of time, is that which renders it the greatest evil unto them who shall be in that condition. So is eternity the life of future blessedness. "We shall ever be with the Lord," without limitation of time, without interruption of enjoyment.

There are no vicissitudes in the heavenly state. The new Jerusalem hath no temple in it; "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof," Rev. xxi. 22. There is no need of instituted means of worship, nor of ordinances of divine service; for we shall need neither increase of grace nor excitations unto its exercise; —the constant, immediate, uninterrupted enjoyment of God and the Lamb supplieth all. And it hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The light of the sun is excellent; howbeit it hath its seasons;—after it hath shone in its brightest lustre, it gives place to the night and darkness. So is the light of the moon of great use in the night; but it hath its seasons also. Such is the light we have of the glory of God and the Lamb in this world. Sometimes it is as the light of the sun, which, under the Gospel, is sevenfold, as the light of seven days in one in comparison of the Law, Isa. xxx. 26;—sometimes as the light of the moon, which giveth relief in the night of temptations and trials. But it is not constant; we are under a vicissitude of light and darkness,—views of Christ, and a loss of him. But in heaven the perpetual presence of Christ with his saints makes it always one noon of light and glory.

4. This vision is not in the least liable unto any weakenings from *internal defects*, nor any assaults from *temptations*, as is the sight of faith in this life. No doubts or fears, no disturbing darts or injections, shall there have any place. There shall no habit, no quality, no inclination or disposition remain in our souls, but what shall eter-

nally lead us unto the contemplation of the glory of Christ with delight and complacency. Nor will there be any defect in the gracious powers of our souls, as unto a perpetual exercise of them; and as to all other opposing enemies, we shall be in a perpetual triumph over them, 1 Cor. xv. 55–57. The mouth of iniquity shall be stopped for ever, and the voice of the self-avenger shall be heard no more.

Wherefore, the vision which we shall have in heaven of the glory of Christ is *serene*,—always the same, always new and indeficient, wherein nothing can disturb the mind in the most perfect operations of a blessed life. And when all the faculties of the soul can, without any internal weakness or external hinderances, exercise their most perfect operations on the most perfect object,—therein lies all the blessedness which our nature is capable of.

Wherefore, whenever in this life we attain any comfortable, refreshing view of the glory of Christ, by the exercise of faith on the revelation of it, with a sense of our interest therein, we cannot but long after, and desire to come unto, this more perfect, abiding, invariable aspect of it.

CHAPTER XIV.

Other Differences between our Beholding the Glory of Christ by Faith in this World and by Sight in Heaven.

Among the many other differences which might be insisted on (although the greatest of them are unto us at present absolutely incomprehensible, and so not to be inquired into), I shall name two only, and so put a close to this Discourse.

I. In the view which we have here of the glory of Christ by faith, we gather things, as it were, *one by one, in several parts and parcels*, out of the Scripture; and comparing them together in our minds, they become the object of our present sight,—which is our spiritual comprehension of the things themselves. We have no proposal of the glory of Christ unto us by vision or illustrious appearance of his person, as Isaiah had of old, chap. vi. 1–4; or as John had in the Revelation, chap. i. 13–16. We need it not;—it would be of no advantage unto us. For as unto the assurance of our faith, we have a word of prophecy more useful unto us than a voice from heaven, 2 Peter i. 17–19. And of those who received such visions, though of eminent use unto the church, yet as unto themselves, one of them cried out, "Woe is me! I am undone;" and the other "fell as dead at his feet." We are not able in this life to bear such glorious representations of him, unto our edification.

And as we have no such external proposals of his glory unto us in *visions*, so neither have we any new revelations of him by *immediate inspiration*. We can see nothing of it, know nothing of it, but what is proposed unto us in the Scripture, and that as it is proposed. Nor doth the Scripture itself, in any one place, make an entire proposal of the glory of Christ, with all that belongs unto it; nor is it capable of so doing, nor can there be any such representation of it unto our capacity on this side heaven. If all the light of the heavenly luminaries had been contracted into one, it would have been destructive, not useful, to our sight; but being by divine wisdom distributed into sun, moon, and stars, each giving out his own proportion, it is suited to declare the glory of God and to enlighten the world. So, if the whole revelation of the glory of Christ, and all that belongs unto it, had been committed into one series and contexture of words, it would have overwhelmed our minds rather than enlightened us. Wherefore God hath distributed the light of it through the whole firmament of the books of the Old and New Testament; whence it communicates itself, by various parts and degrees, unto the proper use of the church. In one place we have a description of his person, and the glory of it; sometimes in words plain and proper, and sometimes in great variety of allegories, conveying a heavenly sense of things unto the minds of them that do believe;—in others, of his love and condescension in his office, and his glory therein. His humiliation, exaltation, and power, are in like manner in sundry places represented unto us. And as one star differeth from another in glory, so it was one way whereby God represented the glory of Christ in types and shadows under the Old Testament, and another wherein it is declared in the New. Illustrious testimonies unto all these things are planted up and down in the Scripture, which we may collect as choice flowers in the paradise of God, for the object of our faith and sight thereby.

So the spouse in the Canticles considered every part of the person and grace of Christ distinctly by itself, and from them all concludes that "he is altogether lovely," chap. v. 10–16. So ought we to do in our study of the Scripture, to find out the revelation of the glory of Christ which is made therein, as did the prophets of old, as unto what they themselves received by immediate inspiration. They "searched diligently what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," 1 Peter i. 11. But this seeing of Christ by parts in the revelation of him is one cause why we see him here but in part.

Some suppose that by chopping, and painting, and gilding, they can make an image of Christ that shall perfectly represent him to

their senses and carnal affections from head to foot. But they "feed on ashes," and have "a lie in their right hand." Jesus Christ is evidently crucified before our eyes in the Scripture, Gal. iii. 1. So also is he evidently exalted and glorified therein. And it is the wisdom of faith to gather into one those parcelled descriptions that are given of him, that they may be the object of its view and contemplation.

In the vision which we shall have *above*, the whole glory of Christ will be at *once* and *always* represented unto us; and we shall be enabled in one act of the light of glory to comprehend it. Here, indeed, we are at a loss;—our minds and understandings fail us in their contemplations. It will not yet enter into our hearts to conceive what is the beauty, what is the glory of this complete representation of Christ unto us. To have at once all the glory of what he is, what he was in his outward state and condition, what he did and suffered, what he is exalted unto,—his love and condescension, his mystical union with the church, and the communication of himself unto it, with the recapitulation of all things in him,—and the glory of God, even the Father, in his wisdom, righteousness, grace, love, goodness, power, shining forth eternally in him, in what he is, hath done, and doth,—all presented unto us in *one view*, all comprehended by us at once, is that which at present we cannot conceive. We can long for it, pant after it, and have some foretastes of it,—namely, of that state and season wherein our whole souls, in all their powers and faculties, shall constantly, inseparably, eternally cleave by love unto whole Christ, in the sight of the glory of his person and grace, until they are watered, dissolved, and inebriated in the waters of life and the rivers of pleasure that are above for evermore. So must we speak of the things which we admire, which we adore, which we love, which we long for, which we have some foretastes of in sweetness ineffable, which yet we cannot comprehend.

These are some few of those things whence ariseth the difference between that view which we have here of the glory of Christ, and that which is reserved for heaven,—namely, such as are taken from the difference between the means or instruments of the one and the other, faith and sight.

II. In the last place, the great difference between them consists in, and is manifested by, their effects. Hereof I shall give some few instances, and close this Discourse.

First, The vision which we shall have of the glory of Christ in heaven, and of the glory of the immense God in him, is perfectly and absolutely *transforming*. It doth change us wholly into the image of Christ. When we shall see him, we shall be as he is; we shall be like him, because we shall see him, 1 John iii. 2. But although the closing, perfecting act of this transformation be an act of sight, or the

sight of glory, yet there are many things towards it, or degrees in it, which we may here take notice of in our way.

1. The soul, upon its *departure* from the body, is immediately freed from all the weakness, disability, darkness, uncertainties, and fears, which were impressed on it from the flesh, wherewith it was in the strictest union. The image of the first Adam as fallen is then abolished. Yea, it is not only freed from all irregular, sinful distempers cleaving to our nature as corrupted, but from all those sinless grievances and infirmities which belong unto the original constitution of it. This necessarily ensues on the dissolution of the person in order unto a blessed state. The first entrance by mortality into immortality, is a step towards glory. The ease which a blessed soul finds in a deliverance from this encumbrance, is a door of entrance into eternal rest. Such a change is made in that which in itself is the centre of all evil,—namely, death,—that it is made a means of freeing us from all the remainders of what is evil.

For this doth not follow absolutely on the nature of the thing itself. A mere dissolution of our natures can bring no advantage with it, especially as it is a part of the curse. But it is from the sanctification of it by the death of Christ. Hereby that which was God's ordinance for the infliction of judgment, becomes an effectual means for the communication of mercy, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 54. It is by virtue of the death of Christ alone, that the souls of believers are freed by death from all impressions of sin, infirmity, and evils, which they have had from the flesh; which were their burden, under which they groaned all their days. No man knows in any measure the excellency of this privilege, and the dawnings of glory which are in it, who hath not been wearied, and even worn out, through long conflicting with the body of death. The soul hereon being freed from all annoyances, all impressions from the flesh, is expedite and enlarged unto the exercise of all its gracious faculties, as we shall see immediately.

With wicked men it is not so. Death unto them is a curse; and the curse is the means of the conveyance of all evil, and not deliverance from any. Wherein they have been warmed and refreshed by the influences of the flesh, they shall be deprived of it. But their souls in their separate state, are perpetually harassed with all the disquieting passions which have been impressed on their minds by their corrupt fleshly lusts. In vain do such persons look for relief by death. If there be any thing remaining of present good and usefulness to them, they shall be deprived of it. And their freedom for a season from bodily pains will no way lie in the balance against that confluence of evils which death will let in upon them.

2. The "spirits of just men," being freed by death from the clog of the flesh, not yet refined,—all the faculties of their souls, and all

the graces in them, as faith, love, and delight, are immediately set at liberty, enabled constantly to exercise themselves on God in Christ. The end for which they were created, for which our nature was endowed with them, was, that we might adhere unto God by them, and come unto the enjoyment of him. Being now freed wholly from all that impotency, perverseness, and disability unto this end, with all the effects of them, which came upon them by the fall; they are carried with a full stream towards God, cleaving unto him with the most intense embraces. And all their actings towards God shall be natural, with facility, joy, delight, and complacency. We know not yet the excellency of the operations of our souls in divine things, when disburdened of their present weight of the flesh. And this is a second step towards the consummation of glory. For,—

In the *resurrection of the body*, upon its full redemption, it shall be so purified, sanctified, glorified, as to give no obstruction unto the soul in its operations, but be a blessed organ for its highest and most spiritual actings. The body shall never more be a trouble, a burden unto the soul, but an assistant in its operations, and participant of its blessedness. Our eyes were made to see our Redeemer, and our other senses to receive impressions from him, according unto their capacity. As the bodies of wicked men shall be restored unto them to increase and complete their misery in their sufferings; so shall the bodies of the just be restored unto them, to heighten and consummate their blessedness.

3. These things are *preparatory* unto glory. The complete communication of it is by the infusion of a new heavenly light into the mind, enabling us to see the Lord Christ as he is. The soul shall not be brought into the immediate presence of Christ without a new power, to behold him and the immediate representation of his glory. Faith now doth cease, as unto the manner of its operation in this life, whilst we are absent from Christ. This light of glory succeeds into its room, fitted for that state and all the ends of it, as faith is for that which is present. And,—

4. In the *first operation* of this light of glory, believers shall so behold the glory of Christ, and the glory of God in him, as that therewith and thereby they shall be immediately and universally changed into his likeness. They shall be as he is, when they shall see him as he is. There is no growth in glory, as to parts;—there may be as to degrees. Additions may be outwardly made unto what is at first received as by the resurrection of the body; but the internal light of glory and its transforming efficacy is capable of no degrees, though new revelations may be made unto it unto eternity. For the infinite fountain of life, and light, and goodness, can never be fathomed, much less exhausted. And what God spake on the entrance of sin, by the

way of contempt and reproach, "Behold, the man is become like one of us!" upbraiding him with what he had foolishly designed;—on the accomplishment of the work of his grace, he says in love and infinite goodness, "Man is become like one of us," in the perfect restoration of our image in him. This is the first effect of the light of glory.

Faith also, in beholding the glory of Christ in this life, is accompanied with a transforming efficacy, as the apostle expressly declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is the principle from whence, and the instrumental cause whereby, all spiritual change is wrought in us in this life; but the work of it is imperfect;—first, because it is gradual, and then because it is partial.

(1.) As unto the *manner* of its operation, it is *gradual*, and doth not at once transform us into the image of Christ; yea, the degrees of its progress therein are unto us for the most part imperceptible. It requires much spiritual wisdom and observation to obtain an experience of them in our own souls. "The inward man is renewed day by day," whilst we behold these invisible things, 2 Cor. iv. 16–18. But how?—even as the outward man decays by age, which is by insensible degrees and alterations. Such is the transformation which we have by faith, in its present view of the glory of Christ. And according to our experience of its efficacy herein, is our evidence of its truth and reality in the beholding of him. No man can have the least ground of assurance that he hath seen Christ and his glory by faith, without some effects of it in changing him into his likeness. For as on the touch of his garment by the woman in the Gospel, virtue went out from him to heal her infirmity; so upon this view of faith, an influence of transforming power will proceed from Christ unto the soul.

(2.) As unto the *event*, it is but *partial*. It doth not bring this work unto perfection. The change wrought by it is indeed great and glorious; or, as the apostle speaks, it is "from glory to glory," in a progress of glorious grace: but *absolute perfection* is reserved for vision. As to divine worship, perfection was not by the law. It did many things preparatory unto the revelation of the will of God concerning it; but it "made nothing perfect:" so absolute perfection in holiness, and the restoration of the image of God, is not by the Gospel, is not by faith;—however, it gives us many preparatory degrees unto it, as the apostle fully declares, Phil. iii. 10–14.

Secondly, Vision is *beatifical*, as it is commonly called, and that not amiss. It gives perfect rest and blessedness unto them in whom it is. This may be a little opened in the ensuing observations.

1. There are *continual operations* of God in Christ in the souls of them that are glorified, and communications from him unto them. For all creatures must eternally live, even in heaven, in dependence on Him who is the eternal fountain of being, life, goodness, and blessed-

ness unto all. As we cannot subsist one moment in our beings, lives, souls, bodies, the inward or outward man, without the continual actings of divine power in us, and towards us; so in the glorified state our all shall depend eternally on divine power and goodness, communicating themselves unto us, for all the ends of our blessed subsistence in heaven.

2. What is the *way and manner* of these communications, we cannot comprehend. We cannot, indeed, fully understand the nature and way of his spiritual communications unto us in this life. We know these things by their signs, their outward means, and principally by the effects they produce in the real change of our natures; but in themselves we see but little of them. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but we know not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. All God's real operations in heaven and earth are incomprehensible, as being acts of infinite power; and we cannot search them out unto perfection.

3. *All communications* from the Divine Being and infinite fulness in heaven unto glorified saints, are in and through Christ Jesus, who shall for ever be the medium of communication between God and the church, even in glory. All things being gathered into one head in him, even things in heaven, and things in earth,—that head being in immediate dependence on God,—this order shall never be dissolved, Eph. i. 10, 11; 1 Cor. iii. 23. And on these communications from God through Christ depends entirely our continuance in a state of blessedness and glory. We shall no more be self-subsistent in glory than we are in nature or grace.

4. The way on our part whereby we shall receive these communications from God by Christ, which are the eternal springs of life, peace, joy, and blessedness, is this vision the sight whereof we speak. For, as it is expressly assigned thereunto in the Scripture, so whereas it contains the perfect operation of our minds and souls in a perfect state, on the most perfect object, it is the only means of our blessedness. And this is the true cause whence there neither is nor can be any satiety or weariness in heaven, in the eternal contemplation of the same glory. For not only the object of our sight is absolutely infinite, which can never be searched unto the bottom, yea, is perpetually new unto a finite understanding; but our subjective blessedness consisting in continual fresh communications from the infinite fulness of the divine nature, derived unto us through vision, is always new, and always will be so to eternity. Herein shall all the saints of God drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand, be satisfied with his likeness, and refresh themselves in the eternal springs of life, light, and joy for evermore.

This *effect*,—that view, which we have by faith of the glory of Christ in this world, doth not produce. It is *sanctifying*, not *glorifying*. The best of saints are far from a perfect or glorified state in this life; and that not only on the account of the outward evils which in their persons they are exposed unto, but also of the weakness and imperfection of their inward state in grace. Yet we may observe some things unto the honour of faith in them who have received it. As,—

(1.) In its due exercise on Christ, it will give unto the souls of believers some *previous participation* of future glory, working in them dispositions unto, and preparation for, the enjoyment of it.

(2.) There is no *glory*, no *peace*, no *joy*, no *satisfaction* in this world, to be compared with what we receive by that *weak* and *imperfect view* which we have of the glory of Christ by faith; yea, all the joys of the world are a thing of nought in comparison of what we so receive.

(3.) It is sufficient to give us such a *perception*, such a *foretaste* of future blessedness in the enjoyment of Christ, as may continually stir us up to breathe and pant after it. But it is not *beatifical*.

Other differences of an alike nature between our beholding of the glory of Christ in this life by faith, and that vision of it which is reserved for heaven, might be insisted on; but I shall proceed no farther. There is nothing farther for us to do herein but that now and always we shut up all our meditations concerning it with the deepest self-abasement, out of a sense of our unworthiness and insufficiency to comprehend those things, admiration of that excellent glory which we cannot comprehend, and vehement longings for that season when we shall see him as he is, be ever with him, and know him even as we are known.

END OF PART I.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

CONCERNING

THE GLORY OF CHRIST;

APPLIED UNTO

UNCONVERTED SINNERS

AND

SAINTS UNDER SPIRITUAL DECAYS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS, FROM JOHN XVII. 24.

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

To the Reader.

The design of this preface is not to commend either the author or the matter contained in this little book. Let every reader do as he finds cause. Nor need any assurance be given that Dr Owen was the author, to any who have conversed with his writings, and will be at the pains to read this over. It is, indeed, his application of the former Discourses upon this subject, printed in the year 1684. But the reason why it was not then added (the omission whereof rendered that book imperfect to judicious readers) seems necessary to be given. Had it pleased God he had lived a little longer, it would have come out as perfect as his other works. But there being no more transcribed in his lifetime than what was then printed, and that published soon after his death, these two chapters, wrote only with his own hand, were found too late to be then added. They are therefore now printed to complete those Discourses. And it is presumed, that as no serious Christian who reads this will be satisfied without the other also, so all who prize the former will be glad of the opportunity to add this thereunto.*

* The Discourses that follow were first printed in 1691, eight years after the death of Dr Owen. This circumstance may explain the absence of the Italics, of which he generally made free use in all his publications.—Ed.

PART II.

MEDITATIONS AND DISCOURSES

CONCERNING

THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

Application of the foregoing Meditations concerning the Glory of Christ: First, in an Exhortation unto such as are not yet Partakers of Him.

That which remains is, to make some application of the glorious truth insisted on unto the souls of them that are concerned; and what I have to offer unto that end I shall distribute under two heads. The first shall be with respect unto them who are yet strangers from this holy and glorious One,—who are not yet made partakers of him, nor have any especial interest in him. And the second shall be directed unto believers, as a guide and assistance unto their recovery from spiritual decays, and the revival of a spring of vigorous grace, holiness, and obedience in them.

For the first of these, although it seems not directly to lie in our way, yet is it suited unto the method of the Gospel, that wherever there is a declaration of the excellencies of Christ, in his person, grace, or office, it should be accompanied with an invitation and exhortation unto sinners to come unto him. This method he himself first made use of, Matt. xi. 27–30; John vii. 37, 38, and consecrated it unto our use also. Besides, it is necessary from the nature of the things themselves; for who can dwell on the consideration of the glory of Christ, being called therewith to the declaration of it, but his own mind will engage him to invite lost sinners unto a participation of him? But I shall at present proceed no farther in this exhortation, but only unto the proposal of some of those considerations which may prepare, incline, and dispose their minds unto a closure with him as he is tendered in the Gospel. As,—

1. Let them consider well what is their present state with respect

unto God and eternity. This Moses wisheth for the Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 29, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" It is the greatest folly in the world to leave the issues of these things unto an uncertain hazard; and that man who cannot prevail with himself strictly to examine what is his state and condition with respect unto eternity, doth never do any good nor abstain from any evil in a due manner. Remember, therefore, that "many are called, but few are chosen." To be called, is to enjoy all the outward privileges of the Gospel,—which is all you unto whom I speak can pretend unto; yet this you may do and not be chosen;—even among those unto whom the word is preached, they are but few that shall be saved. In the distribution made by our Lord Jesus Christ of the hearers of the word into four sorts of ground, it was but one of them that received real benefit thereby; and if our congregations are no better than were his hearers, there is not above a fourth part of them that will be saved,—it may be a far less number;—and is it not strange that every one of them is not jealous over himself and his own condition? Many herein deceive themselves until they fall under woful surprisals. And this is represented in the account of the final judgment; for the generality of those who have professed the Gospel are introduced as complaining of their disappointments, Matt. xxv. 41–44 [10–12 ?]. For what is there spoken is only a declaration of what befell them here in the close of their lives, and their personal judgment thereon.

2. Take heed of being deluded by common presumptions. Most men have some thoughts in general about what their state is, and what it will be in the issue; but they make no diligent search into this matter, because a number of common presumptions do immediately insinuate themselves into their minds for their relief; and they are such as all whose force and efficacy unto this end lies in this, that they differ from others, and are better than they;—as that they are Christians, that they are in the right way of religion, that they are partakers of the outward privileges of the Gospel, hearing the word, and participating of the sacraments;—that they have light and convictions, so as that they abstain from sin, and perform duties so as others do not; and the like. All those with whom it is not so, who are behind them in these things, they judge to be in an ill state and condition, whence they entertain good hopes concerning themselves; and this is all that most trust unto. It is not my present business to discourse the vanity of presumptions;—it hath been done by many. I give only this warning in general, unto those who have the least design or purpose to come to Christ, and to be made partakers of him, that they put no trust in them, that they rely not on them; for if they do so they will eternally deceive their souls. This was a great

part of the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, Matt. iii. 9, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." This was their great comprehensive privilege, containing all the outward church and covenant advantages. These they rested in and trusted to unto their ruin; herein he designed to undeceive them.

3. Consider aright what it is to live and die without an interest in Christ, without a participation of him. Where this is not stated in the mind, where thoughts of it are not continually prevalent, there can be no one step taken in the way towards him. Unless we are thoroughly convinced that without him we are in a state of apostasy from God, under the curse, obnoxious unto eternal wrath, as some of the worst of God's enemies, we shall never flee unto him for refuge in a due manner. "The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick." Christ "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" and the conviction intended is the principal end of the ministry of the law. The miseries of this state have been the subject of innumerable sermons and discourses; but there is a general misery in the whole, that few take themselves to be concerned therein, or apply these things unto themselves. Let us tell men of it a thousand times, yet they either take no notice of it, or believe it not, or look on it as that which belongs unto the way and course of preaching, wherein they are not concerned. These things, it seems, preachers must say; and they may believe them who have a mind thereunto. It is a rare thing that any one shall as much as say unto himself, Is it so with me? And if we now, together with this caution, tell the same men again, that whilst they are uninterested in Christ, not ingrafted into him by faith, that they run in vain, that all their labour in religion is lost, that their duties are all rejected, that they are under the displeasure and curse of God, that their end is eternal destruction,—which are all unquestionably certain,—yet will they let all these things pass by without any farther consideration.

But here I must fix with them unto whom I speak at present,—unless there be a full conviction in them of the woful, deplorable condition of every soul, of whatever quality, profession, religion, outward state it be, who is not yet made partaker of Christ, all that I have farther to add will be of no signification. Remember, then, that the due consideration hereof is unto you, in your state, your chiefest concérnment in this world: and be not afraid to take in a full and deep sense of it; for if you are really delivered from it, and have good evidence thereof, it is nothing unto you but matter of eternal praise and thanksgiving. And if you are not so, it is highly necessary that your minds should be possessed with due apprehension of it. The work of this conviction is the first effect of true religion; and the great abuse of religion in the world is, that a pretence of it

deludes the minds of men to apprehend that it is not necessary: for to be of this or that religion,—of this or that way in religion,—is supposed sufficient to secure the eternal state of men, though they are never convinced of their lost estate by nature.

4. Hereon consider the infinite condescension and love of Christ, in his invitations and calls of you to come unto him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace, and eternal salvation. Multitudes of these invitations and calls are recorded in the Scripture, and they are all of them filled up with those blessed encouragements which divine wisdom knows to be suited unto lost, convinced sinners, in their present state and condition. It were a blessed contemplation, to dwell on the consideration of the infinite condescension, grace, and love of Christ, in his invitations of sinners to come unto him that they may be saved,—of that mixture of wisdom and persuasive grace that is in them,—of the force and efficacy of the pleading and argument that they are accompanied withal, as they are recorded in the Scripture; but that belongs not to my present design. This I shall only say, that in the declaration and preaching of them, Jesus Christ yet stands before sinners, calling, inviting, encouraging them to come unto him.

This is somewhat of the word which he now speaks unto you: Why will ye die? why will ye perish? why will you not have compassion on your own souls? Can your hearts endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day of wrath that is approaching? It is but a little while before all your hopes, your reliefs, and presumptions will forsake you, and leave you eternally miserable. Look unto me, and be saved;—come unto me, and I will ease you of all sins, sorrows, fears, burdens, and give rest unto your souls. Come, I entreat you;—lay aside all procrastinations, all delays;—put me off no more;—eternity lies at the door. Cast out all cursed, self-deceiving reserves;—do not so hate me as that you will rather perish than accept of deliverance by me.

These and the like things doth the Lord Christ continually declare, proclaim, plead, and urge on the souls of sinners; as it is fully declared, Prov. i. 20–33. He doth it in the preaching of the word, as if he were present with you, stood amongst you, and spake personally to every one of you. And because this would not suit his present state of glory, he hath appointed the ministers of the gospel to appear before you, and to deal with you in his stead, avowing as his own the invitations that are given you in his name, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

Consider, therefore, his infinite condescension, grace, and love herein. Why all this towards you? Doth he stand in need of you? Have you deserved it at his hands? Did you love him first? Cannot he be happy and blessed without you? Hath he any design upon you,

that he is so earnest in calling you unto him? Alas! it is nothing but the overflowing of mercy, compassion, and grace, that moves and acts him herein. Here lies the entrance of innumerable souls into a death and condemnation far more severe than those contained in the curse of the law, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. In the contempt of this infinite condescension of Christ in his holy invitation of sinners to himself, lies the sting and poison of unbelief, which unavoidably gives over the souls of men unto eternal ruin. And who shall once pity them to eternity who are guilty of it? Yea, but,—

5. Perhaps, if you should, on his invitation, begin to look to Him, and resolve to come to him, you are greatly afraid that when it comes to the trial he will not receive you; for no heart can conceive, no tongue can express, what wretched, vile, and provoking sinners you have been. That the Lord Christ will receive unto him such as we are, we have no hopes, or that ever we shall find acceptance with him. I say it is not amiss when persons come so far as to be sensible of what discouragements they have to conflict withal, what difficulties lie in their way, and what objections do arise against them; for the most do perish in a senseless stupidity,—they will not consider how it is with them, what is required of them, nor how it will be in the latter end;—they doubt not but that either they do believe already, or can do so when they please. But when any come so far as to charge the failure of their acceptance with Christ on their own unworthiness, and so are discouraged from coming unto him, there are arguments for their conviction and persuasion, which nothing but the devil and unbelief can defeat. Wherefore, that which is now proposed unto consideration in answer hereunto, is the readiness of Christ to receive every sinner, be he who or what he will, that shall come unto him. And hereof we have the highest evidences that divine wisdom and grace can give unto us. This is the language of the Gospel, of all that the Lord Christ did or suffered, which is recorded therein;—this is the divine testimony of the "three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;" and of the "three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood:" all give their joint testimony, that the Lord Christ is ready to receive all sinners that come to him. They who receive not this testimony make God a liar,—both Father, Son, and Spirit. Whatever the Lord Christ is in the constitution of his person,—in the representation of the Father,—in his office,—in what he did on the earth,—in what he doth in heaven,—proclaims the same truth. Nothing but cursed obstinacy in sin and unbelief can suggest a thought unto our minds that he is not willing to receive us when we come unto him. Herein we are to bear testimony against the unbelief of all unto whom the gospel is preached, that come not unto him. Un-

belief acting itself herein, includes a contempt of the wisdom of God, a denial of his truth or faithfulness, an impeachment of the sincerity of Christ in his invitations, making him a deceiver, and will issue in an express hatred of his person and office, and of the wisdom of God in him. Here, then, you are shut up,—you cannot from hence take any countenance unto your unbelief.

6. Consider that he is as able to save us as he is ready and willing to receive us. The testimonies which he hath given us unto his goodness and love are uncontrollable; and none dare directly to call in question or deny his power. Generally, this is taken for granted by all, that Christ is able to save us if he will; yea, who shall question his ability to save us, though we live in sin and unbelief? And many expect that he will do so, because they believe he can if he will. But indeed Christ hath no such power, no such ability: he cannot save unbelieving, impenitent sinners; for this cannot be done without denying himself, acting contrary to his word, and destroying his own glory. Let none please themselves with such vain imaginations. Christ is able to save all them, and only them, who come to God by him. Whilst you live in sin and unbelief, Christ himself cannot save you; but when it comes to the trial in particular, some are apt to think, that although they will not conclude that Christ cannot save them, yet they do, on various accounts, that they cannot be saved by him. This, therefore, we also give testimony unto in our exhortation to come unto him,—namely, that his power to save those that shall comply with his call is sovereign, uncontrollable, almighty, —that nothing can stand in the way of. All things in heaven and earth are committed unto him;—all power is his;—and he will use it unto this end,—namely, the assured salvation of all that come unto him.

7. Consider greatly what hath been spoken of the representation of God, and all the holy properties of his nature, in him. Nothing can possibly give us more encouragement to come unto him; for we have manifested that God, who is infinitely wise and glorious, hath designed to exert all the holy properties of his nature—his mercy, love, grace, goodness, righteousness, wisdom, and power—in him, in and unto the salvation of them that do believe. Whoever, therefore, comes unto Christ by faith on this representation of the glory of God in him, he ascribes and gives unto God all that glory and honour which he aimeth at from his creatures; and we can do nothing wherewith he is pleased equal unto it. Every poor soul that comes by faith unto Christ, gives unto God all that glory which it is his design to manifest and be exalted in;—and what can we do more? There is more glory given unto God by coming unto Christ in believing, than in keeping the whole law; inasmuch as he hath more eminently manifested the holy properties of his nature in the way of salvation by

Christ, than in giving of the law. There is therefore no man who, under gospel invitations, refuseth to come unto and close with Christ by believing, but secretly, through the power of darkness, blindness, and unbelief, he hates God, dislikes all his ways, would not have his glory exalted or manifested, choosing rather to die in enmity against him than to give glory to him. Do not deceive yourselves; it is not an indifferent thing, whether you will come in unto Christ upon his invitations or no,—a thing that you may put off from one season unto another: your present refusal of it is as high an act of enmity against God as your nature is capable of.

8. Consider that by coming unto Christ you shall have an interest in all that glory which we have proposed unto you; for Christ will become yours more intimately than your wives and children are yours; and so all his glory is yours also. All are apt to be affected with the good things of their relations,—their grace, their riches, their beauty, their power; for they judge themselves to have an interest in them, by reason of their relation unto them. Christ is nearer to believers than any natural relations are to us whatever; they have therefore an interest in all his glory. And is this a small thing in your eyes, that Christ shall be yours, and all his glory shall be yours, and you shall have the advantage of it unto your eternal blessedness? Is it nothing unto you to continue strangers from, and uninterested in, all this glory? to be left to take your portion in this world, in lusts, and sins, and pleasures, and a few perishing trifles, with eternal ruin in the close, whilst such durable substance, such riches of glory, are tendered unto you?

Lastly, Consider the horrible ingratitude there is in a neglect or refusal to come in to Christ upon his invitation, with the doleful, eternal ruin that will ensue thereon. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Impenitent unbelievers under the preaching of the gospel, are the vilest and most ungrateful of all God's creation. The devils themselves, as wicked as they are, are not guilty of this sin; for Christ is never tendered unto them,—they never had an offer of salvation on faith and repentance. This is their peculiar sin, and will be the peculiar aggravation of their misery unto eternity. "Hear, ye despisers, wonder, and perish." The sin of the devil is in malice and opposition unto knowledge, above what the nature of man is in this world. Men, therefore, must sin in some instance above the devil, or God would not give them their eternal portion with the devil and his angels:—this is unbelief.

Some, it may be, will say, What then shall we do? what shall we apply ourselves unto? what is it that is required of us?

1. Take the advice of the apostle, Heb. iii. 7, 8, 13, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in

the day of temptation in the wilderness. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." This day, even this, is unto you in the tender of grace the acceptable time;—this is the day of salvation. Others have had this day as well as you, and have missed their opportunity;—take heed lest it should be so with you also. Now if any one should write it down, or peculiarly commit it to remembrance, "This day there was a tender of Christ and salvation in him made unto my soul,—from this time I will resolve to give up myself unto him," and if you form your resolutions, charge your consciences with what you have engaged, and make yourselves to know that if you go back from it, it is a token that you are going to ruin.

2. Consider that it is high time for you to make somewhat of religion. Do not hang always in suspense; let it not be a question with yourselves, whether you have a mind to be saved or no. This is as good a time and season for a resolution as ever you are like to have whilst in this world. Some things, nay, many things, may fall in between this and the next opportunity, that shall put you backward, and make your entrance into the kingdom of heaven far more difficult than ever it was; and the living in that uncertainty at best, which you do, of what will become of you unto eternity, is the most miserable kind of life in the world. Those who put far from them the evil day, and live in the pursuit of lusts and pleasures, have somewhat that gives them present satisfaction, and they say not, "There is no hope," because they "find the life of the hand" [Isa. lvii. 10]; but you have nothing that gives you any prevalent refreshment, neither will your latter end be better than theirs, if you die without an interest in Christ Jesus. Come, therefore, at length, unto a determinate resolution what you will do in this matter. Christ hath waited long for you, and who knows how soon he may withdraw, never to look after you any more?

Upon occasion of the preceding Discourse concerning the Glory of Christ, I thought it necessary to add unto it this brief exhortation unto faith in him, aiming to suit it unto the capacity of the meanest sinner that is capable of any self-consideration as unto his eternal welfare. But yet, a little farther to give efficacy unto this exhortation, it will be necessary to remove some of those common and obvious tergiversations that convinced sinners do usually betake themselves unto, to put off a present compliance with the calls of Christ to come unto him; for although it is unbelief alone, acting in the darkness of men's minds and the obstinacy of their wills, that effectually keeps off sinners from coming unto Christ upon his call, yet it shrouds itself under various pretences, that it may not appear in its own ugly form. For no sin whereof men can be guilty in this world is of so horrible

a nature, and so dreadful an aspect, as is this unbelief, where a clear view of it is obtained in evangelical light. Wherefore, by the aid of Satan, it suggests other pleas and pretences unto the minds of sinners, under which they may countenance themselves in a refusal to come to Christ. See 2 Cor. iv. 4. Any thing else it shall be, but not unbelief;—that they all disavow. I shall therefore speak unto a few of those tergiversations in this case which are obvious, and which are exemplified in the Gospel itself.

First, Some do say, on such exhortations, What is it that you would have us to do?—We hear the word preached, we believe it as well as we can, we do many things willingly, and abstain from many evils diligently; what is more required of us? This is the language of the hearts of the most with whom in this case we have to do. And I say,—

1. It is usual with them who do something in the ways of God, but not all they should, and so nothing in a due manner, to expostulate about requiring of them more than they do. So the people dispute with God himself, Mal. i. 6, iii. 8, 13. So they in the Gospel who esteemed themselves to have done their duty, being pressed unto faith by Christ Jesus, ask him with some indignation, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" John vi. 28. If what we do be not enough, what is it that you require more of us? So was it with the young man, Matt. xix. 20, "What lack I yet?" Be advised, therefore, not to be too confident of your state, lest you should yet lack that one thing, the want whereof might prove your eternal ruin.

2. The things mentioned, with all of the like nature, which may be multiplied, may be where there is no one spark of saving faith. Simon Magus heard the word, and believed as well as he could;—Herod heard it, and did many things gladly;—and all sorts of hypocrites do upon their convictions perform many duties, and abstain from many sins: so as that, notwithstanding this plea, you may perish for ever.

3. Where these things are sincere, they belong unto the exercise of faith; they may be after a sort without faith, but faith cannot be without them. But there is a fundamental act of faith, whereby we close with Christ, whereby we receive him, that is, in order of nature, antecedent unto its actings in all other duties and occasions;—it is laying the foundation; other things belong to the building. This is that you are called on to secure; and you may know it by these two properties:—

1. It is singular. So our Saviour tells the Jews, John vi. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The act, work, or duty of faith, in the receiving of Christ, is a peculiar, singular work, wherein the soul yields especial obedience

unto God;—it is not to be reckoned unto such common duties as those mentioned, but the soul must find out wherein it hath in a singular manner closed with Christ upon the command of God.

2. It is accompanied with a universal spiritual change in the whole soul, 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Wherefore, if you would not choose rather to deceive and ruin your own souls, come to the trial whether indeed you have received Christ in such a singular, transforming act of faith: do not on such pretences want a compliance with the word of exhortation proposed unto you. But,—

Secondly, Some will say, they know not how to proceed in this work. They can make nothing of it; they have tried to come to this believing, but do still fail in what they design; they go on and off, but can make no progress, can come to no satisfaction; therefore they think it best to let things go in general as they are, without putting themselves to farther trouble, as unto any especial act of faith in the receiving of Christ. This is the language of men's hearts, though not of their mouths, another shelter of unbelief,—and they act accordingly; they have a secret despondency, which keeps them safe from attempting a real closure with Christ on the tender of the Gospel. Something may be offered unto this distempered frame of mind.

1. Remember the disciples that were fishing, and had toiled all night, but caught nothing, Luke v. 3, 4. Upon the coming of Christ unto them, he requires that they should cast out their nets once more; Peter makes some excuse, from the labour which they had taken in vain all night; however, he would venture once more, on the command of Christ, and had an astonishing draught of fishes, verses 5–9. Have you been wearied with disappointments in your attempts and resolutions? Yet cast in your net this once more, upon the command of Christ,—venture this once more to come unto him on his call and invitation; you know not what success he may give unto you.

2. Consider that it is not failing in this or that attempt of coming to Christ, but a giving over your endeavours, that will be your ruin. The woman of Canaan, in her great outcry to Christ for mercy, Matt. xv. 22, had many a repulse. First, it is said, he answered her not a word; then his disciples desired that he would send her away, that she might not trouble him any more; whereon he gives a reason why he would not regard her, or why he could justly pass her by; she was not an Israelitess, unto whom he was sent;—yet she gives not over, but pressing into his presence, cries out for mercy, verse 25. Being come to that issue, to try and draw out her faith to the utmost, which was his design from the beginning, he reckons her among dogs, that were not to have children's bread given unto them. Had she

now at last given over upon this severe rebuke, she had never obtained mercy; but persisting in her request, she at last prevailed, verses 27, 28. It may be you have prayed, and cried, and resolved, and vowed, but all without success, as you suppose; sin hath broken through all: however, if you give not over, you shall prevail at last; you know not at what time God will come in with his grace, and Christ will manifest his love unto you as unto the poor woman, after many a rebuke. It may be, after all, he will do it this day; and if not, he may do it another: do not despond. Take that word of Christ himself for your encouragement, Prov. viii. 34, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." If you hear him, and wait, though you have not yet admission, but are kept at the gates and posts of the doors, yet in the issue you shall be blessed.

3. The rule in this case is, Hos. vi. 3, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know." Are you in the way of knowing Christ in the use of means, hearing the word, and sincere endeavours in holy duties? Though you cannot yet attain unto any evidence that you have received him, have closed with him, nothing can ruin you but giving over the way wherein you are; for then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord. Many can give you their experiences, that if they had been discouraged by present overwhelming difficulties, arising from their disappointments, breaking of vows, relapses into folly, they had been utterly ruined; whereas now they are at rest and peace in the bosom of Christ. On a great surprisal, Christ lost at once many disciples, and they lost their souls, John vi. 66, "They went back, and walked no more with him." Take heed of the like discouragements.

Thirdly, Some may say, yea, practically they do say, that these things indeed are necessary; they must come to Christ by believing, or they are undone; but this is not the season of it,—there will be time enough to apply themselves unto it when other occasions are past. At present they have not leisure to enter upon and go through with this duty; wherefore they will abide in their present state for a while, hearing and doing many things, and when time serves, will apply themselves unto this duty also.

1. This is an uncontrollable evidence of that sottishness and folly which is come upon our nature by sin;—a depravation that the apostle places in the head of the evils of corrupted nature, Tit. iii. 1–3. Can any thing be more foolish, sottish, and stupid, than for men to put off the consideration of the eternal concernment of their souls for one hour, being altogether uncertain whether they shall live another or no?—to prefer present trifles before the blessedness or misery of an immortal state? For those who never heard of these things,

who never had any conviction of sin and judgment, to put the evil day far from them, is not much to be admired; but for you who have Christ preached unto you, who own a necessity of coming unto him, to put it off from day to day upon such slight pretences,—it is an astonishing folly! May you not be spoken unto in the language of the Wisdom of God? Prov. vi. 9–11. You come to hear the word, and when you go away, the language of your hearts is, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;" we will abide a little while in our present state, and afterward we will rouse up ourselves. Under this deceit do multitudes perish every day. This is a dark shade, wherein cursed unbelief lies hid.

2. Consider that this is the greatest engine that Satan makes use of in the world among them that hear the word preached unto them, for the ruin of their souls. He hath other arts, and ways, and methods of dealing with other men,—as by sensual and worldly lusts; but as unto them who, through their convictions, do attend unto the preaching of the word, this is his great and almost only engine for their ruin: There needs no haste in this matter,—another time will be more seasonable,—you may be sure not to fail of it before you die; however, this present day and time is most unfit for it,—you have other things to do,—you cannot part with your present frame,—you may come again to hear the word the next opportunity. Know assuredly, if your minds are influenced unto delays of coming to Christ by such insinuations, you are under the power of Satan, and he is like enough to hold you fast unto destruction.

3. This is as evil and dangerous a posture or frame of mind as you can well fall under. If you have learned to put off God, and Christ, and the word for the present season, and yet relieve yourselves in this, that you do not intend, like others, always to reject them, but will have a time to hearken to their calls, you are secured and fortified against all convictions and persuasions, all fears; one answer will serve for all,—within a little while you will do all that can be required of you. This is that which ruins the souls of multitudes every day. It is better dealing with men openly profligate, than with such a trifling promiser. See Isa. v. 7, 10.

4. Remember that the Scripture confines you unto the present day, without the least intimation that you shall have either another day, or another tender of grace and mercy in any day, 2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iii. 7, 13, xii. 15. Take care lest you come short of the grace of God, miss of it by missing your opportunity. Redeem the time, or you are lost for ever.

5. As unto the pretence of your occasions and business, there is a ready way to disappoint the craft of Satan in that pretence,—namely, to mix thoughts of Christ and the renovation of your resolutions

either to come or to cleave unto him with all your occasions. Let nothing put it utterly out of your minds; make it familiar unto you, and you will beat Satan out of that stronghold, Prov. vii. 4. However, shake yourselves out of this dust, or destruction lies at the door.

Fourthly, It is the language of the hearts of some, that if they give up themselves unto a compliance with this exhortation, and go seriously about this duty, they must relinquish and renounce all their lusts and pleasures; yea, much of their converse and society, wherein they find so much present satisfaction, as that they know not how to part with them. If they might retain their old ways, at least some of them, it were another matter; but this total relinquishment of all is very severe.

Ans. 1. The Jesuits, preaching and painting of Christ among some of the Indians, concealed from them his cross and sufferings, telling them only of his present glory and power; so as they pretended to win them over to faith in him, hiding from them that whereby they might be discouraged; and so preached a false Christ unto them, one of their own framing. We dare do no such thing for all the world; we can here use no condescension, no compliance, no composition with respect unto any sin or lust; we have no commission to grant that request of Lot, "Is it not a little one? let it be spared;" nor to come to Naaman's terms, "God be merciful to me in this thing; in all others I will be obedient." Wherefore,—

2. We must here be peremptory with you, whatever be the event; if you are discouraged by it, we cannot help it. Cursed be the man that shall encourage you to come to Christ with hopes of indulgence unto any one sin whatever. I speak not this as though you could at once absolutely and perfectly leave all sin, in the root and branches of it; but only you are to do it in heart and resolution, engaging unto a universal mortification of all sin, as by grace from above you shall be enabled; but your choice must be absolute, without reserves, as to love, interest, and design;—God or the world,—Christ or Belial, —holiness or sin; there is no medium, no terms of composition, 2 Cor. vi. 15–18.

As unto what you pretend of your pleasures, the truth is, you never yet had any real pleasure, nor do know what it is. How easy were it to declare the folly, vanity, bitterness, poison of those things which you have esteemed your pleasures! Here alone—namely, in Christ, and a participation of him—are true pleasures and durable riches to be obtained; pleasure of the same nature with, and such as, like pleasant streams, flow down into the ocean of eternal pleasures above. A few moments in these joys are to be preferred above the longest continuance in the cursed pleasures of this world. See Prov. iii. 13–18.

Fifthly, It will be said by some, that they do not see those who profess themselves to be believers, to be so much better than they are, as that you need to press us so earnestly to so great a change; we know not why we should not be accounted believers already, as well as they. I shall in a few words, as well as I am able, lay this stumbling-block out of the way, though I confess, at this day, it is weighty and cumbersome. And I say,—

1. Among them that profess themselves to be believers, there are many false, corrupt hypocrites; and it is no wonder that on various occasions they lay the stumbling-block of their iniquities before the faces of others; but they shall bear their own burden and judgment.

2. It is acknowledged, it must be bewailed, that some whom we have reason to judge to be true believers, yet, through their unmortified pride, or covetousness, or carelessness in their conversation, or vain attire and conformity to the world, or forwardness, do give just occasion of offence. We confess that God is displeased herewith, Christ and the Gospel dishonoured, and many that are weak are wounded, and others discouraged. But as for you, this is not your rule,—this is not proposed unto you; but that word only is so that will never fail you.

3. The world doth not know, nor is able to make a right judgment of believers; nor do you so, for it is the spiritual man alone that discerneth the things of God. Their infirmities are visible to all,—their graces invisible; the King's daughter is glorious within. And when you are able to make a right judgment of them, you will desire no greater advancement than to be of their society, Ps. xvi. 3.

These few instances of the pretences wherewith unbelief covers its deformity, and hides that destruction wherewith it is accompanied, may suffice unto our present purpose; they are multiplied in the minds of men, impregnated by the suggestions of Satan on their darkness and folly. A little spiritual wisdom will rend the veil of them all, and expose unbelief acting in enmity against Christ under them. But what hath been spoken may suffice to answer the necessity of the preceding exhortation on this occasion.

CHAPTER II.

The Way and Means of the Recovery of Spiritual Decays, and of Obtaining Fresh Springs of Grace.

The application of the same truth, in the second place, belongs unto believers, especially such as have made any long profession of walking in the ways of God and the gospel. And that which I design herein, is to manifest, that a steady spiritual view of the glory

of Christ by faith, will give them a gracious revival from inward decays, and fresh springs of grace, even in their latter days. A truth this is, as we shall see, confirmed by Scripture, with the joyful experience of multitudes of believers, and is of great importance unto all that are so.

There are two things which those who, after a long profession of the gospel, are entering into the confines of eternity do long for and desire. The one is, that all their breaches may be repaired, their decays recovered, their backslidings healed; for unto these things they have been less or more obnoxious in the course of their walking before God. The other is, that they may have fresh springs of spiritual life, and vigorous actings of all divine graces, in spiritual-mindedness, holiness, and fruitfulness, unto the praise of God, the honour of the gospel, and the increase of their own peace and joy. These things they value more than all the world, and all that is in it; about these things are their thoughts and contrivances exercised night and day. Those with whom it is otherwise, whatever they pretend, are in the dark unto themselves and their own condition; for it is in the nature of this grace to grow and increase unto the end. As rivers, the nearer they come unto the ocean whither they tend, the more they increase their waters, and speed their streams; so will grace flow more freely and fully in its near approaches to the ocean of glory. That is not saving which doth not so.

An experience hereof—I mean of the thriving of grace towards the end of our course—is that alone which can support us under the troubles and temptations of life, which we have to conflict withal. So the apostle tells us, that this is our great relief in all our distresses and afflictions, "for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. If it be so, that in the daily decays of the outward man, in all the approaches of its dissolution, we have inward spiritual revivals and renovation, we shall not faint in what we undergo. And without such continual renovations, we shall faint in our distresses, whatever other things we may have, or whatever we pretend unto the contrary.

And ordinarily it is so, in the holy, wise providence of God, that afflictions and troubles increase with age. It is so, in an especial manner, with ministers of the gospel; they have many of them a share in the lot of Peter, which our Lord Jesus Christ declared unto him, John xxi. 18, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Besides those natural distempers and infirmities which accompany the decays of life, troubles

of life, and in their affairs, do usually grow upon them, when they look for nothing less, but were ready to say with Job, "We shall die in our nest," Job xxix. 18. So was it with Jacob, after all his hard labour and travail to provide for his family, such things fell out in it in his old age as had almost broken his heart. And ofttimes both persecutions and public dangers do befall them at the same season. Whilst the outward man is thus perishing, we need great supportment, that we faint not. And this is only to be had in an experience of daily spiritual renovations in the inner man.

The excellency of this mercy the Psalmist expresseth in a heavenly manner, Ps. xcii. 12–15, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

The promise in the 12th verse respects the times of the Messiah, or of the New Testament; for so it is prophesied of him, "In his days the righteous shall flourish," Ps. lxxii. 7,—namely, through the abundance of grace that should be administered from his fulness, as John i. 16; Col. i. 19. And herein consists the glory of the gospel, and not in outward prosperity or external ornaments of divine worship. The flourishing of the righteous, I say, in grace and holiness is the glory of the office of Christ and of the gospel. Where this is not, there is no glory in the profession of our religion. The glory of kings is in the wealth and peace of their subjects; and the glory of Christ is in the grace and holiness of his subjects.

This flourishing is compared to the palm-tree, and the growth of the cedar. The palm-tree is of the greatest verdure, beauty, and fruitfulness, and the cedar of the greatest and longest growth of any trees. So are the righteous compared to the palm-tree for the beauty of profession and fruitfulness in obedience; and unto the cedar for a continual, constant growth and increase in grace. Thus it is with all that are righteous, unless it be from their own sinful neglect, as it is with many in this day. They are hereon rather like the shrubs and heaths in the wilderness, which see not when good cometh, than like the palm-tree or the cedars of Lebanon. And hereby do men what lies in them to obscure the glory of Christ and his kingdom, as well as disquiet their own souls.

The words that follow, verse 13, "Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God," are not distinctive of some from other, as though some only of the flourishing righteous were so planted; but they are descriptive of them all, with an addition of the way and means whereby they are caused so to

grow and flourish. And this is, their implantation in the house of the Lord;—that is, in the church, which is the seat of all the means of spiritual life, both as unto growth and flourishing, which God is pleased to grant unto believers. To be planted in the house of the Lord, is to be fixed and rooted in the grace communicated by the ordinances of divine worship. Unless we are planted in the house of the Lord, we cannot flourish in his courts. See Ps. i. 3. Unless we are partakers of the grace administered in the ordinances, we cannot flourish in a fruitful profession. The outward participation of them is common unto hypocrites, that bear some leaves, but neither grow like the cedar nor bear fruit like the palm-tree. So the apostle prays for believers, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they may be "rooted and grounded in love," Eph. iii. 17,—"rooted, built up, and established," Col. ii. 7. The want hereof is the cause that we have so many fruitless professors; they have entered the courts of God by profession, but were never planted in his house by faith and love. Let us not deceive ourselves herein;—we may be entered into the church, and made partakers of the outward privileges of it, and not be so planted in it as to flourish in grace and fruitfulness.

That which on this occasion I principally intend, is the grace and privilege expressed, verse 14, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." There be three things which constitute a spiritual state, or belong to the life of God. 1. That believers be fat; that is, by the heavenly juice, sap, or fatness of the true olive, of Christ himself, as Rom. xi. 17. This is the principle of spiritual life and grace derived from him. When this abounds in them, so as to give them strength and vigour in the exercise of grace, to keep them from decays and withering, they are said to be fat; which, in the Scripture phrase, is strong and healthy. 2. That they flourish in the greenness (as the word is) and verdure of profession; for vigorous grace will produce a flourishing profession. 3. That they still bring forth fruit in all duties of holy obedience. All these are promised unto them even in old age.

Even trees, when they grow old (the palm and the cedar), are apt to lose of their juice and verdure: and men in old age are subject unto all sorts of decays, both outward and inward. It is a rare thing to see a man in old age naturally vigorous, healthy, and strong; and would it were not more rare to see any spiritually so at the same season! But this is here promised unto believers as an especial grace and privilege, beyond what can be represented in the growth or fruit-bearing of plants and trees.

The grace intended is, that when believers are under all sorts of bodily and natural decays, and, it may be, have been overtaken with spiritual decays also, there is provision made in the covenant to

render them fat, flourishing, and fruitful,—vigorous in the power of internal grace, and flourishing in the expression of it in all duties of obedience; which is that which we now inquire after.

Blessed be God for this good word of his grace, that he hath given us such encouragement against all the decays and temptations of old age which we have to conflict withal!

And the Psalmist, in the next words, declares the greatness of this privilege: "To show that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Consider the oppositions that lie against the flourishing of believers in old age, the difficulties of it, the temptations that must be conquered, the actings of the mind above its natural abilities which are decayed, the weariness that is apt to befall us in a long spiritual conflict, the cries of the flesh to be spared, and we shall see it to be an evidence of the faithfulness, power, and righteousness of God in covenant;—nothing else could produce this mighty effect. So the prophet, treating of the same promise, Hos. xiv. 4–8, closeth his discourse with that blessed remark, verse 9, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them." Spiritual wisdom will make us to see that the faithfulness and power of God are exerted in this work of preserving believers flourishing and fruitful unto the end.

Having laid the foundation of this illustrious testimony, I shall farther declare and confirm my intention, so to make way for the application of the truth under consideration unto this case,—manifesting that the way whereby we may be made partakers of this grace, is by a steady view of the glory of Christ, as proposed to us in the Gospel.

There is a latter spring in the year, a spring in autumn; it is, indeed, for the most part, but faint and weak,—yet is it such as the husbandman cannot spare. And it is an evident sign of barren ground, when it doth not put forth afresh towards the end of the year. God, the good husbandman, looks for the same from us, especially if we had a summer's drought in spiritual decays; as the Psalmist complains, Ps. xxxii. 4. Had we not had a latter spring the last year, the land had greatly suffered under the drought of the summer. And if we have had such a drought in the course of our profession by spiritual decays, as God, the good husbandman, looks for a latter spring in us, even in old age, in the vigorous acting of grace and fruitful obedience; so without it we can neither have peace nor joy in our own souls. If a man, therefore, hath made a great appearance of religion in his former or younger days, and when he is growing into age becomes dead, cold, worldly, selfish,—if he have no fresh springs of spiritual life in him, it is an evidence that he hath a barren heart, that was never really fruitful to God. I know that many stand in

need of being excited by such warning unto a diligent consideration of their state and condition.

It is true, that the latter spring doth not bring forth the same fruit with the former. There is no more required in it but that the ground evidence itself to be in good heart, and put forth that which is proper unto the season. It may be, such graces as were active and vigorous in men at their first conversion unto God, as were carried in a stream of warm, natural affections, may not so eminently abound in the latter spring of old age; but those which are proper for the season—as namely, spirituality, heavenly-mindedness, weanedness from the world, readiness for the cross and death—are necessary, even in old age, to evidence that we have a living principle of grace, and to show thereby that God is upright; He is our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

What is farther to be insisted on, shall be reduced unto these four heads:—

I. That the constitution of spiritual life is such as is meet to thrive, grow, and increase unto the end, and will do so, unless it be from the default of them in whom it is.

II. That notwithstanding this nature and constitution of spiritual life, yet believers are subject unto many decays, partly gradual, and partly by surprisals in temptation, whereby the growth of it is obstructed, unto the dishonour of the gospel and the loss of their own peace with joy.

III. I shall show that such at present is the condition of many professors,—namely, that they are visibly fallen under spiritual decays, and do not evidence any interest in the blessed promise insisted on.

IV. On the confirmation of these things, our inquiry will be, how such persons may be delivered from such decays, and by what means they may obtain the grace here promised, of spiritual flourishing in old age, both in the strengthening of the inward principle of life and abounding in fruits of obedience, which are to the praise of God by Jesus Christ; and then we shall make application unto this case of that truth which is the subject of the preceding discourse.

I. The constitution of spiritual life is such as is meet to grow and increase unto the end. Hereby it doth distinguish itself from that faith which is temporary; for there is a temporary faith, which will both flourish for a season and bring forth some fruit; but it is not in its nature and constitution to abide, to grow and increase, but rather to decay and wither. It is described by our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. xiii. 20, 21. Either some great temptation extinguisheth it, or it decays insensibly, until the mind wherein it was do manifest itself to be utterly barren. And, therefore, whoever is sensible of any spiritual decays, he is called unto a severe trial and examination of himself,

as unto the nature of the principle of his profession and obedience; for such decays do rather argue a principle of temporary faith only, unto which they are proper and natural, than that whose nature it is to thrive and grow to the end, whereon those that have it shall, as it is in the promise, still bring forth fruit, and, without their own great guilt, be always freed from such decays.

That this spiritual life is in its nature and constitution such as will abide, thrive, and grow to the end, is three ways testified unto in the Scripture.

1. In that it is compared unto things of the most infallible increase and progress; for besides that its growth is frequently likened unto that of plants and trees well watered, and in a fruitful soil, which fail not to spring, unless it be from some external violence; it is likewise compared unto such things as whose progress is absolutely infallible, Prov. iv. 18, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The path of the just is his covenant-walk before God, as it is frequently called in the Scripture, Ps. cxix. 35, 105; Isa. xxvi. 7; Ps. xxiii. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Heb. xii. 13; and it compriseth the principle, profession, and fruits of it. This, saith the wise man, is as the shining light; that is, the morning light. And wherein is it so? Why, as that goeth on by degrees, and shineth more and more unto the high noon (though it may be interrupted sometimes by clouds and storms); so is this path of the just,—it goes on and increaseth unto the high noon, the perfect day of glory. It is in its nature so to do, though it may sometimes meet with obstructions, as we shall see afterward; and so doth the morning light also.

There is no visible difference, as unto light, between the light of the morning and the light of the evening; yea, this latter sometimes, from gleams of the setting sun, seems to be more glorious than the other. But herein they differ: the first goes on gradually unto more light, until it comes to perfection; the other gradually gives place unto darkness, until it comes to be midnight. So is it as unto the light of the just and of the hypocrite, and so is it as unto their paths. At first setting out they may seem alike and equal; yea, convictions and spiritual gifts acted with corrupt ends in some hypocrites, may for a time give a greater lustre of profession than the grace of others sincerely converted unto God may attain unto. But herein they discover their different natures: the one increaseth and goeth on constantly, though it may be sometimes but faintly; the other decays, grows dim, gives place to darkness and crooked walking.

This, then, is the nature of the path of the just; and where it is otherwise with us in our walk before God, we can have no evidence that we are in that path, or that we have a living, growing principle

of spiritual life in us. And it is fit that professors of all sorts should be minded of these things; for we may see not a few of them under visible decays, without any sincere endeavours after a recovery, who yet please themselves that the root of the matter is in them. It is so, if love of the world, conformity unto it, negligence in holy duties, and coldness in spiritual love, be an evidence of such decays. But let none deceive their own souls; wherever there is a saving principle of grace, it will be thriving and growing unto the end. And if it fall under obstructions, and thereby into decays for a season, it will give no rest or quietness unto the soul wherein it is, but will labour continually for a recovery. Peace in a spiritually-decaying condition, is a soul-ruining security; better be under terror on the account of surprisal into some sin, than be in peace under evident decays of spiritual life.

And, by the way, this comparing of the path of the just unto the morning light minds me of what I have seen more than once. That light hath sometimes cheerfully appeared unto the world, when, after a little season, by reason of clouds, tempests, and storms, it hath given place again to darkness, like that of the night; but it hath not so been lost and buried like the evening light. After a while it hath recovered itself unto a greater lustre than before, manifesting that it increased in itself whilst it was eclipsed as to us. So hath it been with not a few at their first conversion unto God: great darkness and trouble have, by the efficacy of temptation and injections of Satan, possessed their minds; but the grace which they have received, being as the morning light, hath after a while disentangled itself, and given evidence that it was so far from being extinguished, as that it grew and thrived under all those clouds and darkness; for the light of the just doth in the issue always increase by temptations, as that of the hypocrite is constantly impaired by them.

Again, as it is as the morning light, than which nothing hath a more assured progress; so it is called by our Saviour "living water," John iv. 10, yea, "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," verse 14. It is an indeficient spring,—not a pool or pond, though never so large, which may be dried up. Many such pools of light, gifts, and profession, have we seen utterly dried up, when they have come into age, or been insnared by the temptations of the world. And we may see others every day under dangerous decays; their countenances are changed, and they have lost that oil which makes the face of a believer to shine,—namely, the oil of love, meekness, self-denial, and spirituality of converse; and instead thereof, there is spread upon them the fulsome ointment of pride, self-love, earthly-mindedness, which increaseth on them more and more. But where this principle of spiritual life is, it is as the morning light, as an indeficient

spring that never fails, nor can do so, until it issue in eternal life. And sundry other ways there are whereby the same truth is asserted in the Scripture.

2. There are sundry divine promises given unto believers that so it shall be, or to secure them of such supplies of grace as shall cause their spiritual life to grow, increase, and flourish unto the end; such as that in the psalm which we have considered. For these promises are the means whereby this spiritual life is originally communicated unto us, and whereby it is preserved in us; by them are we made partakers of this divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4; and through them is it continued in us. Now [as to] promises of this nature,—namely, that by the dispensation of the Spirit of Christ, and supplies of his grace, our spiritual life shall flourish, and be made fruitful to the end,—I shall briefly call over one of them only at present, which is recorded, Isa. xliv. 3, 4, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses."

Although this promise may have respect unto the gracious dealing of God with the people of the Jews after their return from the captivity, yet hath it so only as it was typical of the redemption of the church by Jesus Christ; but it belongs properly to the times of the Gospel, when the righteous were to flourish, and it is a promise of the new covenant, as is manifest in that it is not only given unto believers, but is also extended unto their seed and offspring; which is an assured signature of new covenant promises. And here is,—1. A supposition of what we are in ourselves, both before and after our conversion unto God,—namely, as thirsty, dry, and barren ground. We have nothing in ourselves, no radical moisture to make us flourishing and fruitful. And as it is before, so it is after conversion: "We are not sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. Being left to ourselves, we should utterly wither and perish. But,—2. Here is the blessed relief which God in this case hath provided; he will pour the sanctifying water of his Spirit and the blessing of his grace upon us. And this he will so do as to cause us to spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. There is nothing of a more eminent and almost visible growth than willows by the water-courses. Such shall be the spiritual growth of believers under the influences of these promises; that is, they shall be fat and flourishing, and still bring forth fruit. And other promises of the same nature there are many; but we must observe three things concerning them, that we may be satisfied in their accomplishment. As,—

(1.) The promises of the new covenant, as unto the first communication of grace unto the elect, are absolute and unconditional; they

are the executive conveyances of God's immutable purposes and decrees. And what should be the condition of the communication of the first grace unto us? Nothing that is not grace can be so. If it be said that this also is of God in us, which is the condition of the communication of the first saving grace unto us, then I would know whether that be bestowed upon us without any condition. If it be, then that is the first grace, as being absolutely free; if it be not, then what is the condition whereon it is bestowed? concerning which the same inquiry must be made,—and so for ever. But this is the glory of covenant promises, that, as unto the communication of the grace of conversion and sanctification unto the elect, they are absolutely free and unconditionate. But,—

(2.) The promises which respect the growth, degrees, and measures of this grace in believers are not so. There are many duties required of us, that these promises may be accomplished towards us and in us; yea, watchful diligence in universal gospel obedience is expected from us unto this end. See 2 Pet. i. 4–10. This is the ordinary method of the communication of all supplies of grace to make us spiritually flourish and be fruitful,—namely, that we be found in the diligent exercise of what we have received. God doth sometimes deal otherwise, in a way of sovereignty, and surpriseth men with healing grace in the midst of their decays and backslidings; as Isa. lvii. 17, 18. So hath many a poor soul been delivered from going down into the pit. The good shepherd will go out of his way to save a wandering sheep; but this is the ordinary method.

(3.) Notwithstanding these blessed promises of growth, flourishing, and fruitfulness, if we are negligent in the due improvement of the grace which we have received, and the discharge of the duties required of us, we may fall into decays, and be kept in a low, unthrifty state all our days. And this is the principal ground of the discrepancy between the glory and beauty of the church, as represented in the promises of the Gospel, and as exemplified in the lives and walking of professors,—they do not live up unto the condition of their accomplishment in them; howbeit, in God's way and time they shall be all fulfilled. We have, therefore, innumerable blessed promises concerning the thriving, growing, and flourishing of the principle of spiritual life in us, even in old age and until death; but the grace promised unto this end will not befall us whilst we are asleep in spiritual sloth and security. Fervent prayer, the exercise of all grace received, with watchfulness unto all holy duties, are required hereunto.

3. God hath secured the growth of this spiritual life, by the provision of food for it, whereby it may be strengthened and increased; for life must be preserved by food. And this in our case is the Word of God, with all other ordinances of divine worship which depend

thereon, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. Whatever the state of this life be,—whether in its beginning, its progress, its decays,—there is suitable nourishment provided for it in the good Word of God's grace. If men will neglect their daily food that is provided for them, it is no wonder if they be weak and thriftless. And if believers are not earnest in their desires after this food,—if they are not diligent in providing of it, attending unto it,—much more if, through corruptions and temptations, they count it, in the preaching of it, light and common food, which they do not value,—it is no wonder if they fall into spiritual decays; but God hath herein provided for our growth even unto old age.

And this is the first thing which was proposed unto confirmation, —namely, that the constitution and nature of spiritual life is such as to be indeficient, so as to thrive and grow even in old age, and unto the end.

II. The *second* thing proposed is, that notwithstanding all this provision for the growth of spiritual life in us, believers, especially in a long course of profession, are subject to decays, such as may cast them into great perplexities, and endanger their eternal ruin.

And these spiritual decays are of two sorts. 1. Such as are gradual and universal, in the loss of the vigour and life of grace, both in its principle and in its exercise. 2. Such as are occasioned by surprisal into sin through the power of temptation; I mean such sins as do waste the spiritual powers of the soul, and deprive it of all solid peace.

As for temporary believers, give them but time enough in this world, especially if it be accompanied with outward prosperity or persecution; and, for the most part, their decays of one sort or another will make a discovery of their hypocrisy. Though they retain a form of godliness, they deny the power of it, Prov. i. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 5. And if they do not openly relinquish all duties of religion, yet they will grow so lifeless and savourless in them, as shall evidence their condition; for so it is with them who are lukewarm, who are neither hot nor cold, who have a name to live, but are dead.

And herein lieth a signal difference in this matter between sincere believers and those who believe only for a time; for those of the latter sort do either not perceive their sickness and decays,—their minds being taken up and possessed with other things,—or if they do find that it is not with them as it hath been formerly, they are not much concerned, and on any occasional new conviction they cry, "Yet a little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep;" but when the other do find any thing of this nature, it makes them restless for a recovery. And although, through the many snares, temptations, and deceits of sin, or through their ignorance of the right way for their healing, they do not many of them

obtain a speedy recovery, yet none of them do approve themselves in such a condition, or turn unto any undue reliefs.

Now, that believers are subject to decays in both the ways mentioned, we have full testimony in Scripture; for as unto that general, gradual decay, in the loss of our first faith, love, and works, in the weakening of the internal principle of spiritual life, with the loss thereon of delight, joy, and consolation, and the abatement of the fruits of obedience, our Lord Jesus Christ doth expressly charge it on five of the seven churches of Asia, Rev. ii., iii. And in some of them, as Sardis and Laodicea, those decays had proceeded unto such a degree, as that they were in danger of utter rejection. And hereunto answers the experience of all churches and all believers in the world. Those who are otherwise minded are dead in sin, and have got pretences to countenance themselves in their miserable condition. So is it with the Church of Rome; and I wish others did not in some measure follow them therein.

And as unto those of the second sort, whereinto men are cast by surprisals and temptations, producing great spiritual distress and anguish of soul, under a sense of God's displeasure, we have an instance in David, as he gives us an account of himself, Ps. xxxviii. 1–10, "O Lord, thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness," &c.

It is certain that here is a description of a very woful state and condition; and the Psalmist, knowing that he was called of God to be a teacher and instructor of the church in all ages, records his own experience unto that end. Hence the title of it is, "A Psalm to bring to remembrance." Some judge that David had respect unto some great and sore disease that he was then visited withal. But if it were so, it was only an occasion of his complaint; the cause of it was sin alone. And four things he doth represent. 1. That he had departed from God, and fallen into provoking sins, which had produced great distresses in his mind, verses 3, 4. 2. That he had foolishly continued in that state, not making timely application to grace and mercy for healing, whereby it was grown deplorable, verse 5. And this folly is that alone which makes such a condition dangerous,—namely, when men, on their surprisals in sin, do not speedily apply themselves unto healing remedies. 3. That he had herein a continual sense of the displeasure of God by reason of sin, verses 2–4. 4. That he was altogether restless in this state, mourning, groaning, labouring continually for deliverance.

This is a clearer delineation of the condition of believers, when, either by the greatness of any sin, or by a long continuance in an evil and a careless frame, they are cast under a sense of divine displeasure. This opens their minds and their hearts, declaring how all things are within, which they cannot deny. It is not so with many, in the same measures and degrees, as it was with David, whose falls were very great; but the substance of it is found in them all. And herein the heart knoweth its own bitterness; a stranger intermeddleth not with it: none knows the groaning and labouring of a soul convinced of such spiritual decays, but he alone in whom they are. Hereon is it cast down to the earth, going mourning all the day long, though others know nothing of its sorrows: but it is of a far more sad consideration, to see men manifesting their inward decays by their outward fruits, and yet are little or not at all concerned therein. The former are in ways of recovery; these in the paths that go down to the chambers of death.

I suppose, therefore, I may take it for granted, that there are few professors of religion, who have had any long continuance in the ways of it, having withal been exposed unto the temptations of life, and much exercised with the occasions of it, but that they have been asleep in their days, as the spouse complains of herself, Cant. v. 2; that is, they have been overtaken with decays of one sort or another, either with respect unto spiritual or moral duties,—in their relation unto churches or families, in their judgments or their affections, in their inward frames or outward actions, they have been overtaken with the effects of sloth, negligence, or the want of a continual watch in the life of faith. I wish it were otherwise.

I principally herein intend those gradual declensions in the life and power of grace which men in a long course of profession are subject unto. And these for the most part proceed from formality in holy duties, under the constant outward performance of them; vehement engagements in the affairs of life, an overvaluation of sinful enjoyments, growth in carnal wisdom, neglect of daily mortification of such sins as men are naturally disposed unto, with a secret influence from the prevalent temptation of the days wherein we live;—which things are not now to be spoken unto.

III. But I come to that which was proposed in the *third* place,—namely, to show that this at present is the state of many professors of religion, that they are fallen under those spiritual decays, and do not enjoy the effects of the promises concerning flourishing and fruitfulness, which we have insisted on. To fasten a conviction on them, or some of them at least, that it is indeed so with them, is my present design; and this ought to be done with some diligence. The glory of Christ, the honour of the Gospel, and the danger of the souls of

men do call for it. This is the secret root of all our evil, which will not be removed unless it be digged up. Who sees not, who complains not of the loss of, or decays in, the power of religion in the days wherein we live? But few there are who either know or apply themselves, or direct others, unto the proper remedy of this evil. Besides, it is almost as difficult to convince men of their spiritual decays as it is to recover them from them; but without this, healing is impossible. If men know not their sickness, they will not seek for a cure. Some, when they see their sickness and their wound, will apply themselves unto wrong, useless remedies, like them in the prophet Hosea, v. 13. None will make use of any cure who see no disease at all. Wherefore, to fasten a conviction hereof on the minds of some, we may make use of the ensuing inquiries and observations.

1. Have you, in the way of your profession, had any experience of these spiritual decays? I doubt not but that there are some who have been preserved green and flourishing from their first conversion unto God, who never fell under the power of sloth, neglect, or temptation, at least not for any remarkable season; but they are but few. It was not so with scarce any of those believers under the Old Testament whose lives and walkings are recorded for our instruction; and they must be such as lived in an exact and diligent course of mortification. And some there are who have obtained relief and deliverance from under their decays,—whose backslidings have been healed, and their diseases cured. So it was with David, as he divinely expresseth it, Ps. ciii. 1, 3–5, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies: who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." So doth he celebrate his deliverance from that state whereof he complains, Ps. xxxviii.,—which we mentioned before. And there is no grace or mercy that doth more affect the hearts of believers, that gives them a greater transport of joy and thankfulness, than this of deliverance from backslidings. It is a bringing of the soul out of prison, which enlargeth it unto praise, Ps. cxlii. 7. Of this sort I doubt not but that there are many; for God hath given great warnings of the danger of a spiritually-decaying state; and he hath made great promises of recovery from it; and multitudes in the church are daily exercised herein. But I speak in general unto all. Have you any experience of such spiritual decays, either in the frame of your spirits or in the manner of your walking before God; or, at least, that you are prone unto them, if not mightily preserved by the power of grace in your own utmost diligence? If you have not so, then I fear it is from one of these two causes:—

(1.) That, indeed, you have never had any flourishing spiritual state in your souls. He that hath been always weak and sickly doth not know what it is to want a state of health and strength, because he never had experience of it; much less doth he that is dead know what it is to want life. But he that from an exquisite temper of health falls into languishing distempers, knows distinctly both how it was and how it is with him. And the frame of the minds of many professors of religion, with the manner of their walking, is such, as that, if they are not sensible of spiritual decays, it is evident that they never had any good spiritual health; and it is to no purpose to treat with such persons about a recovery. There are, amongst those who make an outward profession of true religion, many that live in all sorts of sins. If you should deal with them about backslidings, decays, and a recovery, you will seem unto them as Lot did to his sons-in-law, when he told them of the destruction of Sodom,—as one that mocked, or made sport with them, Gen. xix. 14; or you will be mocked by them for your pains. They have been always such as they are; it was never otherwise with them; and it is a ridiculous thing to speak to them of a recovery. We must be able in this case to say to men, "Remember whence you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works," Rev. ii. 5. They must have had an experience of a better state, or they will not endeavour a recovery from that wherein they are. Such, therefore, as see neither evil nor danger in their present condition, but suppose all is well enough with them, because it is as good as ever it was, will not easily be brought under this conviction; but they have that which is of no less importance for them to inquire into,—namely, whether they have had any thing of the truth of grace or no. Or,—

(2.) If you have not this experience, it is to be feared that you are asleep in security,—which is hardly distinguishable from death in sin. The church of Laodicea was sensibly decayed, and gone off from its primitive faith and obedience; yet she was so secure in her condition, knew so little of it, that she judged herself, on the contrary, to be in a thriving, flourishing state. She thought herself increased in all church riches and goods,—that is, gifts and grace,—while "she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17; in such a state as wherein it is questionable whether she had any thing of the life and power of grace to be found in her or no. And so is it with many churches at this day, especially that which boasts itself to be without error or blame. And it is strange that a church should suppose that it flourisheth in grace and gifts, when it hath nothing but a noise of words in their stead.

So God testified concerning Ephraim, that "grey hairs were sprinkled on him, yet he knew it not," Hos. vii. 9. He was in a

declining, dying condition, but did not understand it. Hence it is added, "They do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this," verse 10. If men will not learn and own their spiritual decays, there is no hope of prevailing with them to return unto the Lord. "The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick;" Christ "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Such persons are under the power of a stupid security, from whence it will be very hard to rouse them up. Hence it is that we have so little success for the most part in calling persons to look after a revival and recovery of their decays; they acknowledge no such thing in themselves,—such calls may belong unto others; yea, if any word seem to come near them unto their disquietment, they are apt to think it was spoken out of spite and ill-will towards them: they approve of themselves in their present condition. Hence is the complaint of Christ in the ministry of the Word, "I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof," Prov. i. 24, 25. Hence, let this truth be pressed a thousand times, it is not one of a thousand who will think himself so concerned as to apply himself unto a relief. A spirit of slumber seems to be poured on many.

2. To improve this conviction, I would ask of some, whether they have been able to maintain spiritual peace and joy in their souls. I take it for granted that ordinarily they are inseparable adjuncts of the life of faith, in an humble, fruitful walk before God. The Scripture testifieth that they are so; and no experience lies against it in ordinary cases. And I suppose that those unto whom I speak do in some measure know what they are, and do not delude themselves with fancies and imaginations: they have substance in them, however by some derided, and to some unknown. Have this peace and joy been maintained and borne sway in your minds? Have they under all trials and surprisals been quickly composed by them? or are you not rather on all occasions uneasy and perplexed? This is certain, that a decaying spiritual state and solid spiritual peace are inconsistent; and if ever you had such peace, you may by the loss of it know into what state you are come.

3. Not to inquire farther into things internal and hidden, wherein men may justify themselves if they please, there are too many open, visible evidences of these decays among professors of religion; they have not kept them from the eyes of the church, nor yet from the world. Do not pride, selfishness, worldliness, levity of attire, and vanity of life, with corrupt, unsavoury communication, abound among many? The world was never in a worse posture for conformity than it is at this day, wherein all flesh hath corrupted its way; and yet, as to things of outward appearance, how little distinction is left be-

tween it and those who would be esteemed more strict professors of religion! Was this the way and manner of the saints of old,—of those that went before us in the same profession? Was it so with ourselves in the time of our first espousals, when we went after God in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown? as Jer. ii. 2. Some understand what I say: if we have not, some of us, had better days, we never had good days in our lives; if we have had them, why do we not stir up ourselves to look after a recovery?

4. May not God say of many of us what he said of his people of old, "Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel?" Isa. xliii. 22. Have we not been weary of God, until we have abundant cause to be weary of ourselves? The most, I presume, will be ready, with them in Malachi, to say, "How or wherein have we been weary of God?" Do we not abide, yea, abound, in the duties of his service? What can be more required of us? Wherein are we to blame? This were something indeed, but that it is often so, that men are weary of God when they even weary God with their duties and services, Isa. i. 13, 14. God says in his Word, he is weary: they say in their hearts, they are weary, Mal. i. 13. But I answer,—

(1.) Many cannot with any modesty make use of this pretence. Their sloth, indifferency, and negligence in the observance of the duties of divine worship, both in private and public, is notorious. In particular, is not the duty of family prayer neglected by many, at least as to its constancy and fervency? And although it be grounded in the light of nature, confirmed by the general rules of the Scripture, requisite unto the dedication of a family unto God, strengthened by the constant example of all the saints of old, and necessary in the experience of all that walk with God; yet do not many begin to seek out pleas and arguings to justify their omission hereof? Are not all things filled with the fruits of the negligence of such professors in the instruction of their children and servants? And hath not God given severe rebukes unto many of us, in their fearful miscarriages? And as unto the public worship of God, I wish that sloth and indifferency did not appear upon too many, under various pretences. But,—

(2.) This is not that which I do intend. Men may be weary of God, whilst they abide in the observance of a multitude of outward duties.

[1.] They may be so, with respect unto that spirituality and intention of mind unto the exercise of all grace, which are required unto such duties. These are the life, the soul, the animating principle of them, without which their outward performance is but a dead carcase. Men may draw nigh to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him. This is that which becomes God in his worship, and is useful to our own souls; for "God is a Spirit, and he will be wor-

shipped in spirit and in truth;" which he is not, but in the exercise of the graces of his Spirit in the worshippers; "for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things," 1 Tim. iv. 8.

To keep up the mind unto this frame, to stir up all grace unto a constant vigorous exercise in all holy duties, is a matter whereunto great spiritual diligence and watchfulness is required. Watch unto prayer. A thousand pretences rise against it; all the arts of sloth, formality, weariness of the flesh, and the business of life, do contend to frustrate the design of it. And the suitableness of resting in the work done, unto the principles of a natural conscience, gives efficacy to them all: and when men come to satisfy themselves herein, it may be it were better that for a time such duties were wholly omitted; for in that case conscience itself will urgently call on men, not hardened in sin, to a consideration of their condition: wherefore much spiritual labour and diligence is required in this matter. The outward performance of religious duties, be they never so many, or however strictly enjoined, as the daily and nightly canonical hours amongst the Popish devotionists, is an easy task,—much inferior unto the constant labour which some men use in their trades and callings. And in them, in the performance of them, either public or in their families, men may be weary of God: and according as they are remiss in the constant keeping up of spirituality, and the exercise of grace in sacred duties, so is the degree of their weariness. And there is almost nothing whereby men may take a safer measure of their decays or growth, than by the usual frame of their minds in these duties. If they do constantly in them stir up themselves to take hold of God, Isa. lxiv. 7, it is an evidence of a good temper of spiritual health in the soul. But this will not be done without the utmost watchfulness and care against impressions from the flesh and other temptations. But sloth and formality herein is a sign of a thriftless state in the inner man: and all inventions of such formality are disserviceable unto the interest of grace.

[2.] So is it with them also, who, attending unto the outward duties of religion, do yet indulge themselves in any known sin; for there is nothing of God in those duties which tend not unto the mortification of all sin: and men may keep up a form of godliness, to countenance themselves in the neglect of its power. And in particular, where any known sin is indulged unto, where the mortification of it is not duly endeavoured, where our religious duties are not used, applied, and directed unto that end, there is a weariness of whatever is of God in them; nor hath the soul any real intercourse or communion with God by them.

5. If we should make a particular inquiry into the state of our

souls with respect unto those graces which are most useful, and tend most to the glory of God, it is to be feared that the decays of many would be made very evident; such are zeal, humility, contriteness of heart, spiritual-mindedness, vigour of soul, and delight in the ways of God, love, charity, self-denial, and the like. Are we fat and flourishing in these things, even in old age? Are they in us, and do they abound? as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 8. Do we bring forth the fruit of them, so as to show the faithfulness of God in his supply of grace? I shall not make a particular inquiry into them, but only give two general rules, whereby we may try ourselves with respect unto them all.

(1.) The loss of a spiritual appetite unto the food of our souls is an evidence of a decay in all these graces. Spiritual appetite consists in earnest desires, and a savoury relish; so it is described by the apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." There is required unto this spiritual appetite an earnest desire of the Word, grounded on an experience of the grace of God in it, unto this end, that we may grow and thrive spiritually thereby. And this appetite will give us as just a measure of the state of grace in us as a natural appetite unto wholesome food, with due digestion thereon, doth give of a good state of health in the body.

This, therefore, we are to inquire into. Doth it abide in us as formerly? We hear the Word preached as much as ever; but do we do it with the same desire and spiritual relish as before? Some hear to satisfy their convictions, some to please their fancies, and some to judge of the persons by whom it is dispensed. It is but in few that the necessary preparation for the due receiving of it is found.

When men grow in age, they lose much of their natural appetite unto food. They must eat still for, the maintenance of life; but they do it not with that desire after it, and that gust in it, as in the days of youth and health. Hence they are apt to think that the meat which they had formerly was more savoury than what is now provided for them; though what they now enjoy is much to be preferred before what they then had. The change is in themselves. So we may find not a few professors, who are ready to think and say that the preaching which they had in former days, and the religious exercises which they were engaged in, were far to be preferred above what they now enjoy. But the change is in themselves; they have lost their spiritual appetite, or their hunger and thirst after the food of their souls.

"The full soul loatheth an honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet," Prov. xxvii. 7. Men being grown full of themselves, and of a good conceit of their own abilities, have lost

their spiritual appetite unto the Word of God; and this makes the Word lose its power and efficacy towards them. That Word, which the Psalmist says is "sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb," Ps. xix. 10, hath little or no taste or relish in it unto them. If they were hungry, they would find a sweetness in the bitterest of its reproofs, beyond what they can now find in the sweetest of its promises. They come to hear the Word with sick desires, and low expectations, as if they were invited to eat after a feast, being self-full before. But this loss of a spiritual appetite is an evidence of the decay of all other graces whatever.

(2.) A neglect of making religion our principal business, is another evidence of the decay of all sorts of grace in us. For where grace is in its proper exercise, it will subordinate all things unto religion, and the ends of it, as David twenty times declares in the 119th Psalm. All things, all occasions of life, shall be postponed thereunto. The love and valuation of it will bear sway in our minds, our thoughts, and affections; and the practice of it shall give rule unto all other concernments. But is it so with many amongst us? It is well if religion be one thing,—it is far enough from being *the* one thing; every other thing is preferred before it, and it can hardly crowd in to possess any place in their minds. To see men continually plodding in the affairs of the world, regulating all their actings by their concernment in them, diverting only at some seasons, as it were out of their way, unto duties of religion,—it is vain to say that they make religion their business. But there is scarce a more certain evidence of a frame of mind spiritually decaying in all sorts of graces, if ever any of them were in it in sincerity and power, than this one, that men do not make religion their chiefest business. And a little self-examination will help men to judge what it is that they make so to be.

(3.) Lastly, I might also instance the uselessness of men in their profession; in want of love unto all saints, barrenness in good works, unreadiness and unwillingness to comply, in any extraordinary manner, with the calls of God unto repentance and reformation; in love of the world and pride of life, with passions suited unto such principles, predominant in them: for they are all undeniable evidences, that those with whom they are found had never any true grace at all, or that they are fallen under woful decays. But what hath been spoken may be sufficient unto our present purpose.

This is the third thing that was proposed,—namely, an endeavour to leave convictions on the minds of some concerning their spiritual decays, and the necessity of seeking after a revival by the means that shall be insisted on. And I intend it principally for those of us who, under a long profession, are now come unto age, and shall not have much time for duty continued to us. And the truth is, I meet with

none who are Christians of any considerable experience, and are spiritually-minded, but they are sensible of the danger of such decays in this hour of temptation, and how difficult it is, in the use of all means, to keep up a vigorous, active frame of mind, in faith, love, holiness, and fruitfulness. And for those who are not concerned herein, I confess I know not what to make of them, or their religion.

IV. I proceed unto that which was proposed in the *fourth* or *last* place,—namely, the way and means whereby believers may be delivered from these decays, and come to thrive and flourish in the inward principle and outward fruits of spiritual life; which will bring us back unto consideration of that truth which we may seem to have diverted from. And to this end, the things ensuing are proposed unto consideration:—

1. The state of spiritual decays is recoverable. No man that is fallen under it hath any reason to say, There is no hope, provided he take the right way for his recovery. If every step that is lost in the way to heaven should be irrecoverable, woe would be unto us;—we should all assuredly perish. If there were no reparation of our breaches, no healing of our decays, no salvation but for them who are always progressive in grace; if God should mark all that is done amiss, as the Psalmist speaks, "O Lord, who should stand?" nay, if we had not recoveries every day, we should go off with a perpetual backsliding. But then, as was said, it is required that the right means of it be used, and not that which is destructive of what is designed; whereof I shall give an instance. When trees grow old, or are decaying, it is useful to dig about them, and manure them; which may cause them to flourish again, and abound in fruit. But instead hereof, if you remove them out of their soil, to plant them in another, which may promise much advantage, they will assuredly wither and die. So it is with professors, and hath been with many. Finding themselves under manifold decays, and little or nothing of the life and power of religion left in them, they have grown weary of their station and have changed their soil, or turning from one way in religion unto another, as some have turned Papists, some Quakers, and the like, apprehending that fault to be in the religion which they professed, which was indeed only in themselves. You cannot give an instance of any one who did not visibly wither and die therein; but, had they used the proper means for their healing and recovery, they might have lived and brought forth fruit.

2. A strict attendance unto the severities of mortification, with all the duties that lead thereunto, is required unto this end; so also is the utmost diligence in all duties of obedience. These things naturally offer themselves as the first relief in this case, and they ought not to be omitted. But if I should insist upon them, they would branch

themselves into such a multitude of particular directions, as it is inconsistent with my design here to handle. Besides, the way which I intend to propose is of another nature, though consistent with all the duties included in this proposal; yea, such as without which not one of them can be performed in a due manner. Wherefore, as unto these things, I shall only assert their necessity, with a double limitation.

(1.) That no duties of mortification be prescribed unto this end, as a means of recovery from spiritual decays, but what for matter and manner are of divine institution and command. All others are laid under a severe interdict, under what pretence soever they may be used. "Who hath required these things at your hands?" Want hereof is that whereby a pretended design to advance religion in the Papacy hath ruined it. They have, under the name and pretence of the means of mortification, or the duties of it, invented and enjoined, like the Pharisees, a number of works, ways, duties, so called, which God never appointed, nor approved, nor will accept; nor shall they ever do good unto the souls of men. Such are their confessions, disciplines, pilgrimages, fastings, abstinence, framed prayers, to be repeated in stated canonical hours, in such a length and number. In the bodily labour of these things they exercise themselves to no spiritual advantage.

But it is natural to all men to divert to such reliefs in this case. Those who are thoroughly convinced of spiritual decays, are therewithal pressed with a sense of the guilt of sin; for it is sin which hath brought them into that condition. Hereon, in the first place, they set their contrivance at work, how they may atone divine displeasure and obtain acceptance with God; and if they are not under the actual conduct of evangelical light, two things immediately offer themselves unto them. First, Some extraordinary course in duties, which God hath not commanded. This is the way which they betake themselves unto in the Papacy, and which guilt, in the darkness of corrupted nature, vehemently calls for. Secondly, An extraordinary multiplication of such duties as, for the substance of them, are required of us. An instance in both kinds we have, Micah vi. 6, 7, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" And by this means they hope for a restitution into their former condition. And whereas spiritual decays are of two sorts; first, from the power and effect of convictions only, which are multiplied among temporary believers; and, secondly, from degrees in the power and effects of saving grace;—those whose decays are of the

first sort are never to be diverted from attempting their relief by such means; and when they find them fail, for the most part they cease contending, and abandon themselves to the power of their lusts; for they have no evangelical light to guide them in another course.

Unto them who are of the second sort is this direction given, in an endeavour for a recovery from backsliding, and thriving in grace, by a redoubled attendance unto the duties of mortification and new obedience: Let care be taken that, as unto the matter of them, they be of divine appointment; and as to the manner of their performance, that it be regulated by the rules of the Scripture. Such are constant reading and hearing of the Word, prayer with fervency therein, a diligent watch against all temptations and occasions of sin; especially an endeavour, by a holy earnestness, and vehement rebukes of the entrance of any other frame, to keep the mind spiritual and heavenly in its thoughts and affections.

(2.) Let them take heed that they attempt not these things in their own strength. When men have strong convictions that such and such things are their own duty, they are apt to act as if they were to be done in their own strength. They must do them, they will do them,—that is, as unto the outward work,—and, therefore, they think they can do them; that is, in a due manner. The Holy Ghost hath for ever rejected this confidence,—none shall prosper in it, 2 Cor. iii. 5, ix. 8. But hereby many deceive themselves, labouring in the fire, while all they do doth immediately perish; they have been negligent and careless, whereby things are come to an ill posture with them, and that peace which they had is impaired; but now they will pray, and read, and fast, and be liberal to the poor, and now strive after an abstinence from sin. All these things they suppose they can do of themselves, because they can and ought to perform the outward works, wherein the duties intended do consist. Hereby Christ is left out of the whole design, who, when all is done, is the Lord that healeth us, Exod. xv. 26. And there is another evil herein; for whatever men do in their own natural abilities, there is a secret reserve of some kind of merit in it. Those who plead for these things, do aver there can be no merit in any thing but what proceeds from our own free-will; and what is so done hath some kind of merit inseparably accompanying of it; and this is enough to render all endeavours of this kind not only useless and fruitless, but utterly rejected. Faith must engage the assistance of Christ and his grace in and unto these duties; or, however they may be multiplied, they will not be effectual unto our healing and recovery. These things are to be used, according as we receive supplies of grace from above, in subordination unto that work of faith that shall be declared. Wherefore,—

3. The work of recovering backsliders or believers from under their

spiritual decays is an act of sovereign grace, wrought in us by virtue of divine promises. Out of this eater cometh meat. Because believers are liable to such declensions, backslidings, and decays, God hath provided and given unto us great and precious promises of a recovery, if we duly apply ourselves unto the means of it. One of the places only wherein they are recorded I shall here call over and explain, Hos. xiv. 1–8, "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn unto the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips," &c. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him. I am like a green fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found."

The whole matter treated of in general, both as unto the disease and remedy, is fully stated in this passage of Scripture; and that in the experience of the church, and God's dealing with them; we may therefore receive many plain directions from it, and a safe guidance in our progress; which we shall endeavour to take in the ensuing observations:—

(1.) This application of God unto Israel, "O Israel, return," was made when the generality of the people were wicked, and devoted unto utter destruction. So it is declared in the last words of the foregoing chapter; and their desolation fell out not long after accordingly. Wherefore no season nor circumstances of things shall obstruct sovereign grace, when God will exercise it towards his church: it shall work in the midst of desolating judgments.

(2.) In such a time the true Israel of God, the elect themselves, are apt to be overtaken with the sins of the whole, and so to backslide from God, and so to fall into spiritual decays. So Israel had now done, though she had not absolutely broken covenant with God. He was yet unto her "The LORD thy God;" yet she had fallen by her iniquity. Times of public apostasy are often accompanied with partial defects in the best: "Because iniquity aboundeth, the love of many shall wax cold," Matt. xxiv. 12.

(3.) When God designs to heal the backsliding of his people by sovereign grace, he gives them effectual calls unto repentance, and the use of means for their healing: so he doth here by his prophet, "O Israel, return; take with you words." And if I could see that God

did stir up his faithful ministers to apply themselves in a peculiar manner unto this work of pressing vehemently all their congregations with their duty herein, and let them know that there is no other way to prevent their ruin but by returning unto the Lord, according to the ways of it here prescribed, I should not doubt but that the time of healing were at hand.

4. The means prescribed unto this end, that our backslidings may be healed in a way suited unto the glory of God, is renewed repentance: and this acts itself,—

(1.) In fervent prayer. "Take with you words, and say." Consider the greatness and importance of the work before you, and weigh well what you do in your dealing with God. The matter of this prayer is twofold. [1.] The pardon of *all* iniquity; that is, the taking of it away; and no sin is omitted, all being now become equally burdensome: "Take away all iniquity." When the souls of sinners are in good earnest in their return unto God, they will leave out the consideration of no one sin whatever. Nor are we meet for healing, nor shall we apply ourselves unto it in a due manner, without some previous sense of the love of God in the pardon of our sin. [2.] Gracious acceptation: "Receive us graciously." The words in the original are only וְקַח טוֹב, "And receive good;" but both the words being used variously, the sense eminently included in them is well expressed by—"Receive us graciously." After we have cast ourselves under tokens of thy displeasure, now let us know that we are freely accepted with thee. And this also lies in the desires of them who design to obtain a healing of their backslidings; for under them they are sensible that they are obnoxious unto God's displeasure.

(2.) Affectionate confessions of the sin wherein their backslidings did consist, or which were the occasions of them. "Asshur shall not save us;"—"We will say no more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods." Fleshly confidence and false worship were the two great sins that had now ruined the body of the people. These believers themselves had an accession unto them more or less, as now they have unto the prevailing sins of the days wherein we live, by conformity unto the world. Of these sins God expecteth a full and free confession, in order unto our healing.

(3.) A renewed covenant engagement to renounce all other hopes and expectation, and to betake themselves with their whole trust and confidence unto him; whereof they express, first, the cause, which was his mere grace and mercy, "For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy;" and, secondly, the effect of it, which is praise and thanksgiving, "So will we render the calves of our lips." And some things we may hence farther observe as unto the case under consideration. As,—

[1.] Although God will repair our spiritual decays and heal our

backslidings freely, yet he will do it so, or in such a way, as wherein he may communicate grace unto us, to the praise of his own glory. Therefore are these duties prescribed unto us in order thereunto; for although they are not the procuring cause of the love and grace from whence alone we are healed, yet are they required, in the method of the dispensation of grace, to precede the effect of them. Nor have we anywhere a more illustrious instance and testimony of the consistency and harmony which is between sovereign grace and the diligent discharge of our duty than we have in this place; for as God promiseth that he would heal their backslidings out of his free love, verse 4, and would do it by the communication of effectual grace, verse 5, so he enjoins them all these duties in order thereunto.

[2.] That unless we find these things wrought in us in a way of preparation for the receiving of the mercy desired, we have no firm ground of expectation that we shall be made partakers of it; for this is the method of God's dealing with the church. Then, and then only, we may expect a gracious reviving from all our decays, when serious repentance, working in the ways declared, is found in us. This grace will not surprise us in our sloth, negligence, and security, but will make way for itself by stirring us up unto sincere endeavours after it in the perseverance of these duties. And until we see better evidences of this repentance among us than as yet appears, we can have but small hopes of a general recovery from our present decays.

5. The work itself is declared,—(1.) By its nature; (2.) In its causes; (3.) From its effects.

(1.) In the nature of it, it is the healing of backslidings: "I will heal their backslidings,"—the sin whereby they are fallen off from God, unto whom they are now exhorted to return. These bring the souls of men into a diseased state and danger of death: the cure hereof is the work of God alone. Hence he gives himself that title, "I am the LORD that healeth thee," Exod. xv. 26. And because of the poisonous nature of sin, and the danger it brings of eternal death unto the souls of men, the removal of it, or a recovery from it, is often called by the name of healing, Ps. vi. 2; Isa. lvii. 18, 19; Hos. vi. 1. Here it includeth two things: first, the pardon of sin past; and then, a supply of grace to make us fruitful in obedience: "I will be as the dew to Israel;" as we shall see. This is God's healing of backslidings.

(2.) In the causes of it, which are,—1. The principal moving cause; and that is, free, undeserved love: "I will love them freely." From hence alone is our recovery to be expected. 2. The efficient cause; which, as unto sins past, is pardoning mercy: "Mine anger is turned away from him;"—and as unto renewed obedience, in which too our recovery consists, it is in a plentiful supply of effectual grace: "I will

be as the dew unto Israel." Fresh supplies of the Spirit of grace from above are so expressed; this is necessary unto our healing and recovery.

(3.) It is described by its effect, which is a much more abundant fruitfulness in holiness and obedience, in peace and love, than ever they had before attained. This the prophet sets out in multiplied similitudes and metaphors, to denote the greatness and efficacy of grace so communicated.

I have a little insisted on the opening of the context, for sundry reasons.

1. The case which I would consider is in all the parts of it stated distinctly, and represented clearly unto us. There is nothing remains, but only the especial way whereby, in the exercise of faith, this grace may be obtained; which is that which I shall speak unto in the last place, as that which is principally intended in this Discourse.

2. That I might show how great a thing it is to have our spiritual decays made up, our backslidings healed, and so to attain the vigorous acting of grace and spiritual life, with a flourishing profession and fruitful obedience, in old age. It is so set forth here by the Holy Ghost, as that every one must needs have a sense of the beauty and glory of the work: it is that which divine love, mercy, and grace, are eminently effectual in unto the glory of God,—that which so many duties are required to prepare us for. Let no man think that it is a light or common work; every thing in it is peculiar: it is, unto them who are made partakers of it, a life from the dead.

3. That none may utterly despond under their decays. When persons are awakened by new convictions, and begin to feel the weight of them, and how implicately they are entangled with them, they are ready to faint, and even to despair of deliverance. But we see that here is a promise of deliverance from them by pardoning mercy, and also of such fresh springs of grace as shall cause us to abound in holiness and fruitfulness. Who is it that is entangled with corruptions and temptations, that groans under a sense of a cold, lifeless, barren frame of heart? He may take in spiritual refreshment, if by faith he can make application of this promise unto himself.

4. That which remains, is to declare the particular way whereby, in the exercise of faith, we may obtain the fruit of this and all other promises of the like nature, unto the end so often proposed,—namely, of being flourishing and fruitful even in old age. Now, supposing a due attendance unto the duties mentioned, I shall give some directions with respect unto that which gives life, power, and efficacy unto them all, and which will infallibly bring us unto the full enjoyment of this signal mercy; and they are these that follow:—

1. All our supplies of grace are from Jesus Christ. Grace is de-

clared in the promises of the Old Testament; but the way of its communication, and our receiving of it, is revealed unto us in the New. This belongs to the mystery of it, that all grace is from Christ, and shall be in vain expected any other way. He hath assured us, that "without him we can do nothing;" we can no more bring forth fruit, than a branch can that is separated from the vine, John xv. 3–5. He is our head, and all our spiritual influences—that is, divine communication of grace—are from him alone. He is our life efficiently, and liveth in us effectively, so as that our ability for vital acts is from him, Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 1–4. Are we, then, any of us under convictions of spiritual decays? or do we long for such renovations of spiritual strength as may make us flourish in faith, love, and holiness? We must know assuredly, that nothing of all this can be attained, but it must come from Jesus Christ alone. We see what promises are made, what duties are prescribed unto us; but however we should endeavour to apply ourselves unto the one or the other, they would yield us no relief, unless we know how to receive it from Christ himself.

2. The only way of receiving supplies of spiritual strength and grace from Jesus Christ, on our part, is by faith. Hereby we come unto him, are implanted in him, abide with him, so as to bring forth fruit. He dwells in our hearts by faith, and he acts in us by faith, and we live by faith in or on the Son of God. This, I suppose, will be granted, that if we receive any thing from Christ, it must be by faith, it must be in the exercise of it, or in a way of believing; nor is there any one word in the Scripture that gives the least encouragement to expect either grace or mercy from him in any other way, or by any other means.

3. This faith respects the person of Christ, his grace, his whole mediation, with all the effects of it, and his glory in them all. This is that which hath been so much insisted on in the foregoing Discourses as that it ought not to be again insisted upon. This, therefore, is the issue of the whole:—a steady view of the glory of Christ, in his person, grace, and office, through faith,—or a constant, lively exercise of faith on him, according as he is revealed unto us in the Scripture,—is the only effectual way to obtain a revival from under our spiritual decays, and such supplies of grace as shall make us flourishing and fruitful even in old age. He that thus lives by faith in him shall, by his spiritual thriving and growth, "show that the Lord is upright, that he is our rock, and that there is no unrighteousness in him."

We may consider briefly,—first, how this is testified unto in the Scripture; and then, what are the ways whereby this grace or duty will produce this effect; and so put a close unto this part of the application of the sacred truth before declared.

1. This direction is given us, Ps. xxxiv. 5, "They looked unto him,

and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed." That it is Christ, or the glory of God in him, that is thus looked unto, I need not prove,—it will not be denied. And it is their faith which is expressed by their looking unto him; which is nothing but that beholding of his glory which we have described: for it is an act of trust arising from an apprehension of who and what he is. The issue or effect hereof is, that they were lightened; that is, received fresh communication of spiritual, saving, refreshing light from him, and, consequently, of all other graces, whence their faces were not ashamed: nor shall we fail in our expectation of new spiritual communication in the exercise of the same faith.

This is that which we are called unto, Isa. xlv. 22, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." On this look to Christ, on this view of his glory, depends our whole salvation; and therefore all things that are needful thereunto do so also: this is the way whereby we receive grace and glory. This is the direction given us by the Holy Ghost for the attaining of them.

So is the same duty described, Micah vii. 7, "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." The church knew not any other way of relief, whatever her distresses were.

A look unto Christ as crucified (and how glorious he was therein, hath been declared) is made the cause and fountain of that godly sorrow which is a spring unto all other graces, especially in those who have fallen under decays, Zech. xii. 10; and it is so also of desiring strength from him, to enable us to endure all our trials, troubles, and afflictions, with patience unto the end, Heb. xii. 2.

2. The only inquiry remaining, is, how a constant view of the glory of Christ will produce this blessed effect in us: and it will do so several ways.

1. It will be effected by that transforming power and efficacy which this exercise of faith is always accompanied withal. This is that which changeth us every day more and more into the likeness of Christ, as hath been at large before declared. Herein all revivals and all flourishings are contained. To have a good measure of conformity unto Christ is all whereof in this life we are capable: the perfection of it is eternal blessedness. According as are our attainments therein, so is the thriving and flourishing of the life of grace in us; which is that which is aimed at. Other ways and means, it may be, have failed us, let us put this to the trial. Let us live in the constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, and virtue will proceed from him to repair all our decays, to renew a right spirit within us, and to cause us to abound in all duties of obedience. This way of producing these effects flesh and blood will not reveal,—it looks like washing in Jordan to

cure a leprosy; but the life of faith is a mystery known only unto them in whom it is.

2. It will fix the soul unto that object which is suited to give it delight, complacency, and satisfaction. This in perfection is blessedness, for it is caused by the eternal vision of the glory of God in Christ; and the nearer approaches we make unto this state, the better, the more spiritual, the more heavenly, is the state of our souls. And this is to be obtained only by a constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, as hath been declared. And it is several ways effectual unto the end now proposed. For,—

1. The most of our spiritual decays and barrenness arise from an inordinate admission of other things into our minds; for these are they that weaken grace in all its operations. But when the mind is filled with thoughts of Christ and his glory, when the soul thereon cleaves unto him with intense affections, they will cast out, or not give admittance unto, those causes of spiritual weakness and indisposition. See Col. iii. 1–5; Eph. v. 8.

2. Where we are engaged in this duty, it will stir up every grace unto its due exercise; which is that wherein the spiritual revival inquired after doth consist. This is all we desire, all we long for, this will make us fat and flourishing,—namely, that every grace of the Spirit have its due exercise in us. See Rom. v. 3–5; 2 Pet. i. 5–8. Whereas, therefore, Christ himself is the first proper, adequate object of all grace, and all its exercise (for it first respects him, and then other things for him), when the mind is fixed on him and his glory, every grace will be in a readiness for its due exercise. And without this we shall never attain it by any resolutions or endeavours of our own, let us make the trial when we please.

3. This will assuredly put us on a vigilant watch and constant conflict against all the deceitful workings of sin, against all the entrances of temptation, against all the ways and means of surprisals into foolish frames, by vain imaginations, which are the causes of our decays. Our recovery or revival will not be effected, nor a fresh spring of grace be obtained, in a careless, slothful course of profession. Constant watching, fighting, contending against sin, with our utmost endeavour for an absolute conquest over it, are required hereunto. And nothing will so much excite and encourage our souls hereunto as a constant view of Christ and his glory; every thing in him hath a constraining power hereunto, as is known to all who have any acquaintance with these things.

END OF PART II.

TWO

SHORT CATECHISMS:

WHEREIN THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

ARE

UNFOLDED AND EXPLAINED.

PROPER FOR ALL PERSONS TO LEARN
BEFORE THEY BE ADMITTED TO THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER; AND
COMPOSED FOR THE USE OF ALL CONGREGATIONS IN GENERAL.

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord," Ps. xxxiv. 11.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The first edition of these Catechisms issued from the press in 1645. Dr Owen had at that time the charge of the parish of Fordham in Essex, and laboured diligently for the instruction and benefit of his flock, by catechising from house to house. The Catechisms were prepared in order that he might accomplish these parochial duties with greater efficiency and success. "The Lesser Catechism" is designed for the instruction of children;—"The Greater," for the examination of persons more advanced in years. They are chiefly doctrinal. It was the intention of Owen to have followed up this little work by another Catechism on the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and some articles of the Creed. This intention, however, was never fulfilled. These Catechisms on "the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ" are included in this volume,—which embodies all the treatises of Owen directly relating to the Second Person of the Trinity,—inasmuch as, according to a statement of the author in the preface, they were intended to remind his people of what he had publicly taught them, "especially concerning the person and offices of Christ." They were among the first, as the other treatises in this volume are among the last, of our author's publications; and we are thus enabled to mark the undeviating consistency with which, during all the ministrations of his public course, Owen held fast by the great doctrines of the Gospel,—"the unsearchable riches of Christ."—Ed.

TO

MY LOVING NEIGHBOURS AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.

Brethren,

My heart's desire and request unto God for you is, that you may be saved. I say the truth in Christ also, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart, for them amongst you who, as yet, walk disorderly, and not as beseemeth the Gospel, little labouring to acquaint themselves with the mystery of godliness; for many walk, of whom I have told you often weeping, and now tell you again with sorrow, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things.

You know, brethren, how I have been amongst you, and in what manner, for these few years past, and how I have kept back nothing (to the utmost of the dispensation to me committed) that was profitable unto you; but have showed you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to all repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, with what sincerity this hath been by me performed, with what issue and success by you received, God the righteous Judge will one day declare; for before him must both you and I appear, to give an account of the dispensation of the glorious Gospel amongst us;—in the meanwhile, the desire of my heart is, to be servant to the least of you in the work of the Lord; and that in any way which I can conceive profitable unto you, —either in your persons or your families.

Now, amongst my endeavours in this kind, after the ordinance of public preaching the Word, there is not, I conceive, any more needful (as all will grant that know the estate of this place, how taught of late days, how full of grossly ignorant persons) than catechising; which hath caused me to set aside some hours for the compiling of these following, which also I have procured to be printed, merely because the least part of the parish are able to read it in writing;—my intention in them being, principally, to hold out those necessary truths wherein you have been in my preaching more fully instructed. As they are, the use of them I shall briefly present unto you:—

1. The Lesser Catechism may be so learned of the younger sort, that they may be ready to answer to every question thereof.

2. The Greater will call to mind much of what hath been taught you in public, especially concerning the Person and Offices of Jesus Christ.

3. Out of that you may have help to instruct your families in the Lesser, being

so framed, for the most part, that a chapter of the one is spent in unfolding a question of the other.

4. The texts of Scripture quoted are diligently to be sought out and pondered, that you may know indeed whether these things are so.

5. In reading the Word, you may have light into the meaning of many places, by considering what they are produced to confirm.

6. I have been sparing in the doctrine of the Sacraments, because I have already been so frequent in examinations about them.

7. The handling of moral duties I have wholly omitted, because, by God's assistance, I intend for you a brief explication of the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, with some articles of the Creed, not unfolded in these, by themselves, by the way of question and answer.

Now, in all this, as the pains hath been mine, so I pray that the benefit may be yours, and the praise His, to whom alone any good that is in this or any thing else is to be ascribed. Now, the God of heaven continue that peace, love, and amity, amongst ourselves, which hitherto hath been unshaken, in these divided times, and grant that the sceptre and kingdom of his Son may be gloriously advanced in your hearts, that the things which concern your peace may not be hidden from your eyes in this your day; which is the daily prayer of

Your servant in the work of the Lord,

J. O.

From my Study,
September the last, [1645.]

THE

LESSER CATECHISM.

QUES. *Whence is all truth concerning God and ourselves to be learned?*

ANS. From the holy Scripture, the Word of God.—Chapter i. of the Greater Catechism.

Q. *What do the Scriptures teach that God is?*

A. An eternal, infinite, most holy Spirit, giving being to all things, and doing with them whatsoever he pleaseth.—Chap. ii.

Q. *Is there but one God?*

A. One only, in respect of his essence and being, but one in three distinct persons, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—Chap. iii.

Q. *What else is held forth in the Word concerning God, that we ought to know?*

A. His decrees, and his works.—Chap. iv.

Q. *What are the decrees of God concerning us?*

A. His eternal purposes, of saving some by Jesus Christ, for the praise of his glory, and of condemning others for their sins.—Chap. v.

Q. *What are the works of God?*

A. Acts or doings of his power, whereby he createth, sustaineth, and governeth all things.—Chap. vi.

Q. *What is required from us towards Almighty God?*

A. Holy and spiritual obedience, according to his law given unto us.—Chap. vii.

Q. *Are we able to do this of ourselves?*

A. No, in no wise, being by nature unto every good work reprobate.—Chap. vii.

Q. *How came we into this estate, being at the first created in the image of God, in righteousness and innocency?*

A. By the fall of our first parents, breaking the covenant of God, losing his grace, and deserving his curse.—Chap. viii.

Q. *By what way may we be delivered from this miserable estate?*

A. Only by Jesus Christ.—Chap. ix.

Q. *What is Jesus Christ?*

A. God and man united in one person, to be a Mediator between God and man.—Chap x.

Q. *What is he unto us?*

A. A King, a Priest, and a Prophet.—Chap. xi.

Q. *Wherein doth he exercise his kingly power towards us?*

A. In converting us unto God by his Spirit, subduing us unto his obedience, and ruling in us by his grace.—Chap. xii.

Q. *In what doth the exercise of his priestly office for us chiefly consist?*

A. In offering up himself an acceptable sacrifice on the cross, so satisfying the justice of God for our sins, removing his curse from our persons, and bringing us unto him.—Chap. xiii.

Q. *Wherein doth Christ exercise his prophetical office towards us?*

A. In revealing to our hearts, from the bosom of his Father, the way and truth whereby we must come unto him.—Chap. xiii.

Q. *In what condition doth Jesus Christ exercise these offices?*

A. He did in a low estate of humiliation on earth, but now in a glorious estate of exaltation in heaven.—Chap. xiv.

Q. *For whose sake doth Christ perform all these?*

A. Only for his elect.—Chap. xv.

Q. *What is the church of Christ?*

A. The universal company of God's elect, called to the adoption of children.—Chap. xvi.

Q. *How come we to be members of this church?*

A. By a lively faith.—Chap. xvii.

Q. *What is a lively faith?*

A. An assured resting of the soul upon God's promises of mercy in Jesus Christ, for pardon of sins here and glory hereafter.—Chap. xviii.

Q. *How come we to have this faith?*

A. By the effectual working of the Spirit of God in our hearts, freely calling us from the state of nature to the state of grace.—Chap. xviii.

Q. *Are we accounted righteous for our faith?*

A. No, but only for the righteousness of Christ, freely imputed unto us, and laid hold of by faith.—Chap. xix.

Q. 1. *Is there no more required of us but faith only?*

A. Yes; repentance also, and holiness.—Chap. xx.

Q. 2. *What is repentance?*

A. A forsaking of all sin, with godly sorrow for what we have committed.—Chap. xx.

Q. 3. *What is that holiness which is required of us?*

A. Universal obedience to the will of God revealed unto us.—Chap. xx.

Q. *What are the privileges of believers?*

A. First, union with Christ; secondly, adoption of children; thirdly, communion of saints; fourthly, right to the seals of the new covenant; fifthly, Christian liberty; sixthly, resurrection of the body to life eternal.—Chap. xxi.

Q. 1. *What are the sacraments, or seals, of the new covenant?*

A. Visible seals of God's spiritual promises, made unto us in the blood of Jesus Christ.—Chap. xxii.

Q. 2. *Which be they?*

A. Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. *What is baptism?*

A. A holy ordinance, whereby, being sprinkled with water according to Christ's institution, we are by his grace made children of God, and have the promises of the covenant sealed unto us.—Chap. xxiii.

Q. *What is the Lord's supper?*

A. A holy ordinance of Christ, appointed to communicate unto believers his body and blood spiritually, being represented by bread and wine, blessed, broken, poured out, and received of them.—Chap. xxiv.

Q. *Who have a right unto this sacrament?*

A. They only who have an interest in Jesus Christ by faith.—Chap. xxiv.

Q. *What is the communion of saints?*

A. A holy conjunction between all God's people, partakers of the same Spirit, and members of the same mystical body.—Chap. xxv.

Q. *What is the end of all this dispensation?*

A. The glory of God in our salvation.

Glory be to God on high!

THE

GREATER CATECHISM.

CHAP. I.—Of the Scripture.

Ques. 1. *What is Christian religion?*

Ans. The only [a]way of[1] [2] knowing God aright, and [b]living unto him.—[a]John xiv. 5, 6, xvii. 3; Acts iv. 12.—[b]Col. i. 10; 2 Cor. v. 15; Gal. ii. 19, 20.

Q. 2. *Whence is it to be learned?*

A. From the holy[3] Scripture only.—Isa. viii. 20; John v. 39.

Q. 3. *What is the Scripture?*

A. The books of the [a]Old and [b]New[4] [5] [6] Testament, [c]given by inspiration from God, containing all things necessary to be believed and done, that God may be worshipped and our souls saved.—[a]Isa. viii. 20; Rom. iii. 2.—[b]Rev. xxii. 19, 20.—[c]2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; Ps. xix. 7, 8; Jer. vii. 13; John xx. 31.

Q. 4. *How know you them to be the word of God?*

A. By the [a]testimony[7] of God's Spirit, working faith in my heart to close with that [b]heavenly majesty, and clear divine truth, that shineth in them.—[a]Matt. xvi. 17; John xvi. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 John ii. 20, v. 6.—[b]Luke xxiv. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Heb. iv. 12; 2 Pet. i. 19.

[1] Every one out of this way everlastingly damned.

[2] The life of religion is in the Life.

[3] Popish traditions are false lights, leading from God.

[4] The authority of the Scripture dependeth not on the authority of the church, as the Papists blaspheme.

[5] All human inventions unnecessary helps in the worship of God.

[6] The word thereof is the sole directory for faith, worship, and life.

[7] This alone persuadeth and inwardly convinceth the heart of the divine verity of the Scripture; other motives, also, there are from without, and unanswerable arguments to prove the truth of them; as,—1. Their antiquity; 2. Preservation from fury; 3. Prophecies in them; 4. The holiness and majesty of their doctrine, agreeable to the nature of God; 5. Miracles; 6. The testimony of the church of all ages; 7. The blood of innumerable martyrs, &c.

CHAP. II.—Of God.

Q. 1. *What do the Scriptures teach concerning God?*

A. First, what he is, or his nature; secondly, what he doth, or his works.—Exod. iii. 14; Isa. xlv. 6; Heb. i. 1–3, xi. 6.

Q. 2. *What is God in himself?*

A. An [a]eternal, [b]infinite,[1 2 3] [c]incomprehensible [d]Spirit, [e]giving being to all things, and doing with them whatsoever he pleaseth.—[a] Deut. xxxiii. 27; Isa. lvii. 15; Rev. i. 8.—[b] 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 2–5, &c.—[c] Exod. xxxiii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 16.—[d] John iv. 24.—[e] Gen. i. 1; Ps. cxv. 3, cxxxv. 6; Isa. xlvi. 10; John v. 17; Heb. i. 2.

Q. 3. *Do we here know God as he is?*

A. No; his glorious being is not of us, in this life, to be comprehended.—Exod. xxxiii. 23; 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Q. 4. *Whereby is God chiefly made known unto us in the Word?*

A. First, by his [a]names; secondly, by his [b]attributes or properties.—[a] Exod. iii. 14, vi. 3; Ps. lxxxiii. 18.—[b] Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Matt. v. 48.

Q. 5. *What are the names of God?*

A. Glorious titles, which he[4] hath given himself, to hold forth his excellencies unto us, with some perfections whereby he will reveal himself.—Exod. iii. 14, 15, vi. 3, xxxiv. 6, 7; Gen. xvii. 1.

Q. 6. *What are the attributes of God?*

A. His infinite perfections in being and working.—Rev. iv. 8–11.

Q. 7. *What are the chief attributes of his being?*

A. [a]Eternity, [b]infiniteness, [c]simplicity[5 6] or purity, [d]all-sufficiency, [e]perfectness, [f]immutability, [g]life, [h]will, and [i]understanding.—[a] Deut. xxxiii. 27; Ps. xciii. 2; Isa. lvii. 15; Rev. i. 11.—[b] 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 1–4, 8–10.—[c] Exod. iii. 14.—[d] Gen. xvii. 1; Ps. cxxxv. 4–6.—[e] Job xi. 7–9; Rom. xi. 33–36.—[f] Mal. iii. 6; James i. 17. [g] Judges viii. 19; 1 Sam. xxv. 34; 2 Kings iii. 14; Ezek. xiv. 16,

[1] The perfection of God's being is known of us chiefly by removing all imperfections.

[2] Hence the abominable vanity of idolaters, and of the blasphemous Papists, that picture God.

[3] Let us prostrate ourselves in holy adoration of that which we cannot comprehend.

[4] The divers names of God signify one and the same thing, but under diverse notions in respect of our conception.

[5] Some of these attributes belong so unto God, as that they are in no sort to be ascribed to any else,—as infiniteness, eternity, &c. Others are after a sort attributed to some of his creatures, in that he communicateth unto them some of the effects of them in himself,—as life, goodness, &c.

[6] The first of these are motives to humble adoration, fear, self-abhorrency; the other, to faith, hope, love, and confidence, through Jesus Christ.

xvi. 48; Matt. xvi. 16; Acts xiv. 15; 1 Thess. i. 9.—[h] Dan. iv. 35; Isa. xlvi. 10; Eph. i. 5, 11; James i. 18.—[i] Ps. vii. 8, cxxxix. 2, cxlvii. 4; Jer. xi. 20; Heb. iv. 13.

Q. 8. *What are the attributes which usually are ascribed to him in his works, or the acts of his will?*

A. [a] Goodness, [b] power, [1 2] [c] justice, [d] mercy, [e] holiness, [f] wisdom, and the like; which he delighteth to exercise towards his creatures, for the praise of his glory.—[a] Ps. cxix. 68; Matt. xix. 17.—[b] Exod. xv. 11; Ps. lxii. 11; Rev. xix. 1.—[c] Zeph. iii. 5; Ps. xi. 7; Jer. xii. 1; Rom. i. 32.—[d] Ps. cxxx. 7; Rom. ix. 15; Eph. ii. 4.—[e] Exod. xv. 11; Josh. xxiv. 19; Hab. i. 13; Rev. iv. 8.—[f] Rom. xi. 33, xvi. 27.

CHAP. III.—Of the Holy Trinity.

Q. 1. *Is there but one God to whom these properties do belong?*

A. [a] One only, in respect of his essence and being, but one [b] in three distinct persons, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—[a] Deut. vi. 4; Matt. xix. 17; Eph. iv. 5, 6.—[b] Gen. i. 26; 1 John v. 7; Matt. xxviii. 19.

Q. 2. *What mean you by person?*

A. A distinct manner of [3 4 5] subsistence or being, distinguished from the other persons by its own properties.—John v. 17; Heb. i. 3.

Q. 3. *What is the distinguishing property of the person of the Father?*

A. To be of himself only the fountain of the Godhead.—John v. 26, 27; Eph. i. 3.

Q. 4. *What is the property of the Son?*

A. To be begotten of his Father from eternity.—Ps. ii. 7; John i. 14, iii. 16.

Q. 5. *What of the Holy Ghost?*

A. To proceed from the Father and the Son.—John xiv 17, xvi. 14, xv. 26, xx. 22.

Q. 6. *Are these three one?*

A. One [a] every way, in nature, will, and essential properties, [b] distinguished only in their personal manner of subsistence.—[a] John x. 30; Rom. iii. 30.—[b] John xv. 26; 1 John v. 7.

[1] Nothing is to be ascribed unto God, nor imagined of him, but what is exactly agreeable to those his glorious properties.

[2] These last are no less essential unto God than the former;—only we thus distinguish them, because these are chiefly seen in his works.

[3] This is that mysterious ark that must not be pried into, nor the least tittle spoken about it, wherein plain Scripture goeth not before.

[4] To deny the Deity of any one person, is in effect to deny the whole Godhead; for whosoever hath not the Son, hath not the Father.

[5] This only doctrine remained undefiled in the Papacy.

Q. 7. *Can we conceive these things as they are in themselves?*

A. Neither [a]we nor yet the [b]angels[1] of heaven are at all able to dive into these secrets, as they are internally in God; [c]but in respect of the outward dispensation of themselves to us by creation, redemption, and sanctification, a knowledge may be attained of these things, saving and heavenly.—[a] 1 Tim. vi. 16.—[b] Isa. vi. 2, 3.—[c] Col. i. 11–14.

CHAP. IV.—Of the Works of God; and, First, of those that are Internal and Immanent.

Q. 1. *What do the Scriptures teach concerning the works of God?*

A. That they are of two sorts; first, internal,[2] in his counsel, decrees, and purposes, towards his creatures; secondly, external, in his works over and about them, to the praise of his own glory.—Acts xv. 18; Prov. xvi. 4.

Q. 2. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. [a]Eternal, [b]unchangeable purposes[3 4 5] of his will, concerning the being and well-being of his creatures.—[a] Mic. v. 2; Eph. iii. 9–11; Acts xv. 18.—[b] Isa. xiv. 24, xlvi. 10; Rom. ix. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Q. 3. *Concerning which of his creatures chiefly are his decrees to be considered?*

A. Angels and men, for whom other things were ordained.—1 Tim. v. 21; Jude 6.

Q. 4. *What are the decrees of God concerning men?*

A. Election and reprobation.—Rom. ix. 11–13.

Q. 5. *What is the decree of election?*

A. The [a]eternal, [b]free, [c]immutable[6 7] purpose of God, [d]whereby in Jesus Christ he chooseth unto himself whom he pleaseth out of [e]whole mankind, determining to bestow upon them, for his sake, [f]grace here, and everlasting happiness hereafter, for the praise of his glory, by the way of mercy.[8]—[a]Eph. i. 4; Acts xiii. 48; Rom.

[1] We must labour to make out comfort from the proper work of every person towards us.

[2] The purposes and decrees of God, so far as by him revealed, are objects of our faith, and full of comfort.

[3] Farther reasons of God's decrees than his own will, not to be inquired after.

[4] The changes in the Scripture ascribed unto God are only in the outward dispensations and works, variously tending to one infallible event, by him proposed.

[5] The Arminians' blasphemy, in saying God sometimes fails of his purposes.

[6] The decree of election is the fountain of all spiritual graces, for they are bestowed only on the elect.

[7] In nothing doth natural corruption more exalt itself against God, than in opposing the freedom of his grace in his eternal decrees.

[8] From the execution of these decrees flows that variety and difference we see in the dispensation of the means of grace,—God sending the Gospel where he hath a remnant according to election.

viii. 29, 30.—[b] Matt. xi. 26.—[c] 2 Tim. ii. 19.—[d] Eph. i. 4, 5; Matt. xxii. 14.—[e] Rom. ix. 18–21.—[f] John vi. 37, xvii. 6, 9, 11, 24.

Q. 6. *Doth any thing in us move the Lord thus to choose us from amongst others?*

A. No, in no wise; we are in the same lump with others rejected, when separated by his undeserved grace.—Rom. ix. 11, 12; Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. iv. 7; 2 Tim. i. 9.

Q. 7. *What is the decree of reprobation?*

A. The eternal purpose of God to suffer many to sin, leave them in their sin, and not giving them to Christ, to punish them for their sin.—Rom. ix. 11, 12, 21, 22; Prov. xvi. 4; Matt. xi. 25, 26; 2 Pet. ii. 12; Jude 4.

CHAP. V.—Of the Works of God that outwardly are of Him.

Q. 1. *What are the works of God that outwardly respect his creatures?*

A. First, of creation; secondly, of [1] actual providence.—Ps. xxxiii. 9; Heb. i. 2, 3.

Q. 2. *What is the work of creation?*

A. An act or work of God's almighty power, whereby of nothing, in six days, he created heaven, earth, and the sea, with all things in them contained.—Gen. i. 1; Exod. xx. 11; Prov. xvi. 4.

Q. 3. *Wherefore did God make man?*

A. For his own glory in his service [2] [3] and obedience.—Gen. i. 26, 27, ii. 16, 17; Rom. ix. 23.

Q. 4. *Was man able to yield the service and worship that God required of him?*

A. Yea, to the uttermost, being created upright in the image of God, in purity, innocency, righteousness, and holiness.—Gen. i. 26; Eccles. vii. 29; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10.

Q. 5. *What was the rule whereby man was at first to be directed in his obedience?*

A. The moral [4] or eternal law of God, implanted in his nature and written in his heart by creation, being the tenor of the covenant between God and him, sacramentally typified by the tree of knowledge of good and evil.—Gen. ii. 15–17; Rom. ii. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 24.

[1] The very outward works of God are sufficient to convince men of his eternal power and Godhead, and to leave them inexcusable, if they serve him not.

[2] The glory of God is to be preferred above our own either being or well-being, as the supreme end of them.

[3] The approaching unto God in his service is the chief exaltation of our nature above the beasts that perish.

[4] God never allowed, from the beginning, that the will of the creature should be the measure of his worship and honour.

Q. 6. *Do we stand in the same covenant still, and have we the same power to yield obedience unto God?*

A. No; the [a] covenant was[1] broken by the sin of Adam, with whom it was made, [b] our nature corrupted, [c] and all power to do good utterly lost.—[a] Gen. iii. 16–18; Gal. iii. 10, 11, 21; Heb. vii. 19, viii. 13. —[b] Job xiv. 4; Ps. li. 5.—[c] Gen. vi. 5; Jer. xiii. 23.

CHAP. VI.—Of God's actual Providence.

Q. 1. *What is God's actual providence?*

A. The effectual working of his[2 3 4] power, and almighty act of his will, whereby he sustaineth, governeth, and disposeth of all things, men and their actions, to the ends which he hath ordained for them. —Exod. iv. 11; Job v. 10–12, ix. 5, 6; Ps. cxlvii. 4; Prov. xv. 3; Isa. xlv. 6, 7; John v. 17; Acts xvii. 28; Heb. i. 3.

Q. 2. *How is this providence exercised towards mankind?*

A. Two ways; first, [a] peculiarly towards his church, or elect, in their generations, for whom are all things; secondly, [b] towards all in a general manner, yet with various and divers dispensations.—[a] Deut. xxxii. 10; Ps. xvii. 8; Zech. ii. 8; Matt. xvi. 18, xix. 2, 29; 1 Pet. v. 7.—[b] Gen ix. 5; Ps. lxxv. 6, 7; Isa. xlv. 6, 7; Matt. v. 45.

Q. 3. *Wherein chiefly consists the outward providence of God towards his church?*

A. In three things;—first, in [a] causing all[5] things to work together for their good; secondly, in [b] ruling and disposing of kingdoms, nations, and persons, for their benefit; thirdly, [c] in avenging them of their adversaries.—[a] Matt. vi. 31–33; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Tim. vi. 17; 2 Pet. i. 3.—[b] Ps. cv. 14, 15; Isa. xliv. 28; Dan. ii. 44; Rom. ix. 17. —[c] Isa. lx. 12; Zech. xii. 2–5; Luke xviii. 7; Rev. xvii. 14.

Q. 4. *Doth God rule also in and over the sinful actions of wicked men?*

A. Yea, he willingly (according[6] to his determinate counsel) suffereth them to be, for the manifestation of his glory, and by them

[1] Though we have all lost our right unto the promise of the first covenant, yet all not restored by Christ are under the commination and curse thereof.

[2] To this providence is to be ascribed all the good we do enjoy, and all the afflictions we undergo.

[3] Fortune, chance, and the like, are names without things, scarce fit to be used among Christians, seeing Providence certainly ruleth all to appointed ends.

[4] No free-will in man exempted either from the eternal decree or the overruling providence of God.

[5] Though the dispensations of God's providence towards his people be various, yet every issue and act of it tends to one certain end,—their good in his glory.

[6] Almighty God knows how to bring light out of darkness, good out of evil, the salvation of his elect out of Judas's treachery, the Jews' cruelty, and Pilate's injustice.

effecteth his own righteous ends.—2 Sam. xii. 11, xvi. 10; 1 Kings xi. 31, xxii. 22; Job i. 21; Prov. xxii. 14; Isa. x. 6, 7; Ezek. xxi. 19–21; Amos vii. 17; Acts iv. 27, 28; Rom. i. 24, ix. 22; 1 Pet. ii. 8; Rev. xvii. 17.

Q. 5. *Doth the providence of God extend itself to every small thing?*

A. The least grass of the field, hair of our heads, or worm of the earth, is not exempted from his knowledge and care.—Job xxxix.; Ps. civ. 21, cxlv. 15; Jonah iv. 7; Matt. vi. 26–29, x. 29, 30.

CHAP. VII.—Of the Law of God.

Q. 1. *Which is the law that God gave man at first to fulfil?*

A. The same which was afterwards[1] written with the finger of God in two tables of stone on Mount Horeb, called the Ten Commandments.—Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Q. 2. *Is the observation of this law still required of us?*

A. Yes, to the uttermost tittle.—Matt. v. 17; 1 John iii. 4; Rom. iii. 31; James ii. 8–10; Gal. iii.

Q. 3. *Are we able of ourselves to*[2][3] *perform it?*

A. No, in no wise; the law is spiritual, but we are carnal.—1 Kings viii. 46; Gen. vi. 5; John xv. 5; Rom. vii. 14, viii. 7; 1 John i. 8.

Q. 4. *Did, then, God give a law which could not be kept?*

A. No; when God gave it, we had power to keep it; which since we have lost in Adam.—Gen. i. 26; Eph. iv. 19; Rom. v. 12.

Q. 5. *Whereto, then, doth the law now serve?*

A. For two general ends; first, [a] to be a rule of our duty, or to discover to us the obedience of God required; secondly, [b] to drive us unto Christ.—[a] Ps. xix. 7–11; 1 Tim. i. 8, 9.—[b] Gal. iii. 24.

Q. 6. *How doth the law drive us unto Christ?*

A. Divers ways; as, first, [a] by laying open unto us the utter disability of our nature to do any good; secondly, [b] by charging the wrath and curse of God, due to sin, upon the conscience; thirdly, [c] by bringing the whole soul under bondage to sin, death, Satan, and hell,—so making us long and seek for a Saviour.—[a] Rom. vii. 7–9; Gal. iii. 19.—[b] Rom. iii. 19, 20, iv. 15, v. 20; Gal. iii. 10.—[c] Gal. iii. 22; Heb. ii. 15.

[1] This law of God bindeth us now, not because delivered to the Jews on Mount Horeb, but because written in the hearts of all by the finger of God at the first.

[2] After the fall, the law ceased to be a rule of justification, and became a rule for sanctification only.

[3] It is of free grace that God giveth power to yield any obedience, and accepteth of any obedience that is not perfect.

CHAP. VIII.—Of the State of Corrupted Nature.

Q. 1. *How came this weakness and disability upon us?*

A. By the sin and[1] shameful fall of our first parents.—Rom. v. 12, 14.

Q. 2. *Wherein did that hurt us, their posterity?*

A. Divers ways; first, [a] in that we were all guilty of the same breach of covenant with Adam, being all in him; secondly, [b] our souls with his were deprived of that holiness, innocency, and righteousness wherein they were at first created; thirdly, [c] pollution and defilement of nature came upon us; with, fourthly, [d] an extreme disability of doing any thing that is well-pleasing unto God; [e] by all which we are made obnoxious to the curse.—[a] John iii. 36; Rom. v. 12; Eph. ii. 3. —[b] Gen. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 23, 24; Col. iii. 10.—[c] Job xiv. 4; Ps. li. 7; John iii. 6; Rom. iii. 13.—[d] Gen. vi. 5; Eph. ii. 1; Jer. vi. 16, xiii. 23; Rom. viii. 7.—[e] Gen. iii. 17; Gal. iii. 10.

Q. 3. *Wherein doth the curse of God consist?*

A. In divers things; first, [a] in the[2] guilt of death, temporal and eternal; secondly, [b] the loss of the grace and favour of God; thirdly, [c] guilt and horror of conscience, despair and anguish here; with, fourthly, [d] eternal damnation hereafter.—[a] Gen. ii. 17; Rom. i. 18, v. 12, 17; Eph. ii. 3.—[b] Gen. iii. 24; Ezek. xvi. 3–5; Eph. ii. 13.— [c] Gen. iii. 10; Isa. xlviii. 22; Rom. iii. 9, 19, Gal. iii. 22.—[d] Gen. iii. 10, 13; John iii. 36.

Q. 4. *Are all men born in this estate?*

A. Every one without exception.—Ps. li. 5; Isa. liii. 6; Rom. iii. 9–12; Eph. ii. 3.

Q. 5. *And do they continue therein?*

A. Of themselves[3] they cannot otherwise do, being able neither to [a] know, nor [b] will, nor [c] do any thing that is spiritually good and pleasing unto God.—[a] Acts viii. 31, xvi. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. v. 8; John i. 5.—[b] Jer. vi. 16, xiii. 23; Luke iv. 18; Rom. vi. 16, viii. 7. —[c] John vi. 44; 2 Cor. iii. 5.

[1] This is that which commonly is called original sin, which in general denoteth the whole misery and corruption of our nature; as,—1. The guilt of Adam's actual sin to us imputed; 2. Loss of God's glorious image, innocency and holiness; 3. Deriving by propagation a nature—(1.) Defiled with the pollution, (2.) Laden with the guilt, (3.) Subdued to the power of sin; 4. A being exposed to all temporal miseries, leading to and procuring death; 5. An alienation from God, with voluntary obedience to Satan and lust; 6. An utter disability to good, or to labour for mercy; 7. Eternal damnation of body and soul in hell.

[2] All that a natural man hath on this side hell is free mercy.

[3] The end of this is Jesus Christ, to all that fly for refuge to the hope set before them.

Q. 6. *Have they, then, no way of themselves to escape the curse and wrath of God?*

A. None at all; they can neither satisfy his justice, nor fulfil his law.

CHAP. IX.—Of the Incarnation of Christ.

Q. 1. *Shall all mankind, then, everlastingly perish?*

A. No; God, of his free grace, hath prepared a way to redeem and save his elect.—John iii. 16; Isa. liii. 6.

Q. 2. *What way was this?*

A. By sending his own Son[1] Jesus Christ in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemning sin in the flesh.—Rom. viii. 3.

Q. 3. *Who is this you call his own Son?*

A. The second person of the Trinity, co-eternal and of the same Deity with his Father.—John i. 14; Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4; 1 John i. 1.

Q. 4. *How did God send him?*

A. By causing him to be made flesh of a pure virgin, and to dwell among us, that he might be obedient unto death, the death of the cross.—Isa. l. 6; John i. 14; Luke i. 35; Phil. ii. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

CHAP. X.—Of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Q. 1. *What doth the Scripture teach us of Jesus Christ?*

A. Chiefly two things; first, his[2] person, or what he is in himself; secondly, his offices, or what he is unto us.

Q. 2. *What doth it teach of his person?*

[1] This is that great mystery of godliness that the angels themselves admire;—the most transcendent expression of God's infinite love,—the laying forth of all the treasure of his wisdom and goodness.

[2] 1. Though our Saviour Christ be one God with his Father, he is not one person with him. 2. Jesus Christ is God and man in one,—not a God and a man; God incarnate,—not a man deified. 3. The essential properties of either nature remain in his person theirs still, not communicated unto the other; as of the Deity to be eternal, everywhere; of the humanity, to be born and die. 4. Whatever may be said of either nature may be said of his whole person; so God may be said to die, but not the Godhead; the man Christ to be everywhere, but not his humanity; for his one person is all this. 5. The monstrous figment of transubstantiation, or Christ's corporeal presence in the sacrament, fully overthrows our Saviour's human nature, and makes him a mere shadow. 6. All natural properties are double in Christ,—as will, &c., still distinct; all personal, as subsistence, single.

A. That he is truly God, and perfect man, partaker of the natures of God and man in one person, between whom he is a Mediator.—John i. 14; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 5; 1 Tim ii. 5; 1 John i. 1.

Q. 3. *How prove you Jesus Christ to be truly God?*

A. Divers ways; *first,* by places of Scripture, speaking of the great God Jehovah in the Old Testament, applied to our Saviour in the New; as, Numb. xxi. 5, 6, in 1 Cor. x. 9; Ps. cii. 25–27, in Heb. i. 10; Isa. vi. 2–4, in John xii. 40, 41; Isa. viii. 13, 14, in Luke ii. 34, Rom. ix. 33; Isa. xl. 3, 4, in John i. 23; Isa. xlv. 22, 23, in Rom. xiv. 11, Phil. ii. 10, 11; Mal. iii. 1, in Matt. xi. 10.

Secondly, By the works of the Deity ascribed unto him; as, first, of creation, John i. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Heb. i. 2; secondly, of preservation in providence, Heb. i. 3; John v. 17; thirdly, miracles.

Thirdly, By the essential attributes of God being ascribed unto him; as, first, immensity, Matt. xxviii. 20; John xiv. 23; Eph. iii. 17; secondly, eternity, John i. 1; Rev. i. 11; Mic. v. 2; thirdly, immutability, Heb. i. 11, 12; fourthly, omniscience, John xxi. 17; Rev. ii. 23; fifthly, majesty and glory equal to his Father, John v. 23; Rev. v. 13; Phil. i. 2, ii. 6, 9, 10.

Fourthly, By the names given unto him; as, first, of God expressly, John i. 1, xx. 28; Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6; Heb. i. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 16; secondly, of the Son of God, John i. 18; Rom. viii. 3, &c.

Q. 4. *Was it necessary that our Redeemer should be God?*

A. Yes; that he might be able to save to the uttermost, and to satisfy the wrath of his Father, which no creature could perform.—Isa. xliii. 25, liii. 6; Dan. ix. 17, 19.

Q. 5. *How prove you that he was a perfect man?*

A. *First,* By the prophecies that went before, that so he should be. —Gen. iii. 15, xviii. 18.

Secondly, By the relation of their accomplishment.—Matt. i. 1; Rom. i. 4; Gal. iv. 4.

Thirdly, By the Scriptures assigning to him those things which are required to a perfect man; as, first, a body, Luke xxiv. 39; Heb. ii. 17, x. 5; 1 John i. 1; secondly, a soul, Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 34;—and therein, first, a will, Matt. xxvi. 39; secondly, affections, Mark iii. 5; Luke x. 21; thirdly, endowments, Luke ii. 52.

Fourthly, General infirmities of nature.—Matt. iv. 2; John iv. 6; Heb. ii. 18.

Q. 6. *Wherefore was our Redeemer to be man?*

A. That the nature which had offended might suffer, and make satisfaction, and so he might be every way a fit and sufficient Saviour for men.—Heb. ii. 10–17.

CHAP. XI.—Of the Offices of Christ; and, First, of his Kingly.

Q. 1. *How many are the offices of Jesus Christ?*

A. Three; first, of a [a] King; secondly, [b] a[1] [2] Priest; thirdly, a [c] Prophet.—[a] Ps. ii. 6.—[b] Ps. cx. 4.—[c] Deut. xviii. 15.

Q. 2. *Hath he these offices peculiar by nature?*

A. No; he only received them for the present dispensation, until the work of redemption be perfected.—Ps. cx. 1; Acts ii. 36, x. 42; 1 Cor. xi. 3, xv. 27, 28; Phil. ii. 9; Heb. iii. 2, 6, ii. 7–9.

Q. 3. *Wherein doth the kingly office of Christ consist?*

A. In a two-fold power; first, his power of ruling in and over his church; secondly, his power of subduing his enemies.—Ps. cx. 3–7.

Q. 4. *What is his ruling power in and over his people?*

A. That supreme authority which,[3] [4] for their everlasting good, he useth towards them, whereof in general there be two acts; first, [a] internal and spiritual, in converting their souls unto him, making them unto himself a willing, obedient, persevering people; secondly, [b] external and ecclesiastical, in giving perfect laws and rules for their government, as gathered into holy societies under him.—[a] Isa. liii. 12, lix. 20, 21, with Heb. viii. 10–12; Isa. lxi. 1, 2; John i. 16, xii. 32; Mark i. 15; Matt. xxviii. 20; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.—[b] Matt. xvi. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 8–14; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Q. 5. *How many are the acts of his kingly power towards his enemies?*

A. Two also; first, [a] internal, by the[5] mighty working of his Word, and the spirit of bondage upon their hearts, convincing, amazing, terrifying their consciences, hardening their spirits for ruin; secondly, [b] external, in judgments and vengeance, which ofttimes he beginneth in this life, and will continue unto eternity.—[a] Ps. cx.; John vi. 46, viii. 59, ix. 41, xii. 40; 2 Cor. x. 4–6; 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.—[b] Mark xvi. 16; Luke xix. 27; Acts xiii. 11; Rev. xvii. 14.

[1] In the exercise of these offices, Christ is also the sole head, husband, and first-born of the church.

[2] Papal usurpation upon these offices of Christ manifests the pope to be the Man of Sin.

[3] Christ's subjects are all born rebels, and are stubborn, until he make them obedient by his Word and Spirit.

[4] Christ hath not delegated his kingly power of law-making for his church to any here below.

[5] The end of Christ in exercising his kingly power over his enemies, is the glory of his gospel and the good of his people.

CHAP. XII.—Of Christ's Priestly Office.

Q. 1. *By what means did Jesus Christ undertake the office of an eternal priest?*

A. By [a] the decree, ordination, and will of God his Father, [b] whereunto he yielded voluntary obedience; so [c] that concerning this there was a compact and covenant between them.—[a] Ps. cx. 4; Heb. v. 5, 6, vii. 17, 18.—[b] Isa. l. 4–6; Heb. x. 5–10.—[c] Ps. ii. 7, 8; Isa. liii. 8, 10–12; Phil. ii. 7, 9; Heb. xii. 2; John xvii. 2, 4.

Q. 2. *Wherein doth his execution of this office consist?*

A. In bringing his people unto God.—Heb. ii. 10, iv. 16, vii. 25.

Q. 3. *What are the parts of it?*

A. First, [a] oblation; secondly, [b] intercession.[1]—[a] Heb. ix. 14.—[b] Heb. vii. 25.

Q. 4. *What is the oblation of Christ?*

A. The [a] offering up of himself upon the altar of the cross, an holy propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of all the elect throughout the world; as [b] also, the presentation of himself for us in heaven, sprinkled with the blood of the covenant.—[a] Isa. liii. 10, 12; John iii. 16, xi. 51, xvii. 19; Heb. ix. 13, 14.—[b] Heb. ix. 24.

Q. 5. *Whereby doth this oblation do good unto us?*

A. Divers ways; first, in that it satisfied the justice of God; secondly, it redeemed us from the power of sin, death, and hell; thirdly, it ratified the new covenant of grace; fourthly, it procured for us grace here, and glory hereafter;—by all which means the peace and reconciliation between God and us is wrought.—Eph. ii. 14, 15.

Q. 6. *How did the oblation of Christ satisfy God's justice for our sin?*

A. In that for us he underwent the[2] punishment due to our sin.—Isa. liii. 4–6; John x. 11; Rom. iii. 25, 26, iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 24.

Q. 7. *What was that punishment?*

A. The wrath of God, the curse[3] of the law, the pains of hell, due

[1] Against both these the Papists are exceedingly blasphemous; against the one, by making their mass a sacrifice for sins,—the other, by making saints mediators of intercession.

[2] Christ's undergoing punishment for us was, first, typified by the old sacrifices; secondly, foretold in the first promise; thirdly, made lawful and valid in itself,—*first*, by God's determination, the supreme lawgiver; *secondly*, his own voluntary undergoing it; *thirdly*, by a relaxation of the law in regard of the subject punished; —fourthly, beneficial to us, because united to us; as, *first*, our head; *secondly*, our elder brother; *thirdly*, our sponsor or surety; *fourthly*, our husband; *fifthly*, our God, or Redeemer, &c.

[3] No change in all these, but what necessarily follows the change of the persons sustaining.

to sinners, in body and soul.—Gen. ii. 17; Deut. xxvii. 15–26; Isa. lix. 2; Rom. v. 12; Eph. ii. 3; John iii. 36; Heb. ii. 14.

Q. 8. *Did Christ undergo all these?*

A. Yes; in respect of the greatness[1] and extremity, not the eternity and continuance of those pains; for it was impossible he should be holden of death.—Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 33, 34, xv. 34; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20; Heb. v. 7; Ps. xviii. 5.

Q. 9. *How could the punishment of one satisfy for the offence of all?*

A. In that he was not a mere[2] man only, but God also,—of infinitely more value than all those who had offended.—Rom. v. 9; Heb. ix. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 18.

Q. 10. *How did the oblation of Christ redeem us from death and hell?*

A. First, [a] by paying a ransom[3] to God, the judge and lawgiver, who had condemned us; secondly, [b] by overcoming and spoiling Satan, death, and the powers of hell, that detained us captives.—[a] Matt. xx. 28; John vi. 51; Mark x. 45; Rom. iii. 25; 1 Cor. vi. 20; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. x. 9.—[b] John v. 24; Col. ii. 13–15; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Q. 11. *What was the ransom that Christ paid for us?*

A. His own precious blood.—Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. i. 19.

Q. 12. *How was the new covenant ratified in his blood?*

A. By being accompanied with[4] his death; for that, as all other testaments, was to be ratified by the death of the testator.—Gen. xxii. 18; Heb. ix. 16, viii. 10–12.

Q. 13. *What is this new covenant?*

A. The gracious, free, [a] immutable promise of God, made unto all his elect fallen in Adam, to [b] give them Jesus Christ, and [c] in him mercy, pardon, grace, and glory, [d] with a re-stipulation of faith from them unto this promise, and new obedience.—[a] Gen. iii. 15; Jer. xxxi. 31–34, xxxii. 40; Heb. viii. 10–12.—[b] Gal. iii. 8, 16; Gen. xii. 3.—[c] Rom. viii. 32; Eph. i. 3, 4.—[d] Mark xvi. 16; John i. 12, x. 27, 28.

Q. 14. *How did Christ procure for us grace, faith, and glory?*

A. By the way of purchase[5] and merit; for the death of Christ deservedly procured of God that he should bless us with all[6] spiritual

[1] The death that Christ underwent was eternal in its own nature and tendence,—not so to him, because of his holiness, power, and the unity of his person.

[2] He suffered not as God, but he suffered who was God.

[3] We are freed from the anger of God, by a perfect rendering to the full value of what he required,—from the power of Satan, by absolute conquest on our behalf.

[4] The new covenant is Christ's legacy, in his last will unto his people,—the eternal inheritance of glory being conveyed thereby.

[5] The death of Christ was satisfactory in respect of the strict justice of God,—meritorious in respect of the covenant between him and his Father.

[6] All these holy truths are directly denied by the blasphemous Socinians; and

blessings needful for our coming unto him.—Isa. liii. 11, 12; John xvii. 2; Acts xx. 28; Rom. v. 17, 18; Eph. ii. 15, 16, i. 4; Phil. i. 29; Tit. ii. 14; Rev. i. 5, 6.

Q. 15. *What is the intercession of Christ?*

A. His continual soliciting[1] of God on our behalf, begun here in fervent prayers, continued in heaven by appearing as our advocate at the throne of grace.—Ps. ii. 8; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25, ix. 24, x. 19–21; 1 John ii. 1, 2; John xvii.

CHAP. XIII.—Of Christ's Prophetical Office.

Q. 1. *Wherein doth the prophetical office of Christ consist?*

A. In his embassage[2] from God to man, revealing from the bosom of his Father the whole mystery of godliness, the way and truth whereby we must come unto God.—Matt. v.; John i. 18, iii. 32, x. 9, 14, xiv. 5, 6, xvii. 8, xviii. 37.

Q. 2. *How doth he exercise this office towards us?*

A. By making known[3] the whole doctrine of truth unto us in a saving and spiritual manner.—Deut. xviii. 18; Isa. xlii. 6; Heb. iii. 1.

Q. 3. *By what means doth he perform all this?*

A. Divers; as, first, [a] internally and effectually, by his Spirit writing his law in our hearts; secondly, [b] outwardly and instrumentally, by the Word preached.—[a] Jer. xxxi. 31–34; 2 Cor. iii. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 9; Heb. viii. 10.—[b] John xx. 31; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 8–13; 2 Pet. i. 21.

CHAP. XIV.—Of the Two-fold Estate of Christ.

Q. 1. *In what estate or condition doth Christ exercise these offices?*

A. In a two-fold estate; first, of humiliation[4 5 6] or abasement; secondly, of exaltation or glory.—Phil. ii. 8–10.

by the Papists, with their merits, masses, penance, and purgatory, by consequent, overthrown.

[1] To make saints our intercessors, is to renounce Jesus Christ from being a sufficient Saviour.

[2] Christ differed from all other prophets; first, in his sending, which was immediately from the bosom of his Father; secondly, his assistance, which was the fulness of the Spirit; thirdly, his manner of teaching,—with authority.

[3] To accuse his Word of imperfection, in doctrine or discipline, is to deny him a perfect prophet, or to have borne witness unto all truth.

[4] The humiliation of Christ shows us what we must here do and suffer,—his exaltation, what we may hope for.

[5] The first of these holds forth his mighty love to us, the other his mighty power in himself.

[6] The only way to heaven is by the cross.

Q. 2. *Wherein consisteth the state of Christ's humiliation?*

A. In three things; first, [a] in his incarnation, or being born of woman; secondly, [b] his obedience, or fulfilling the whole law, moral and ceremonial; thirdly, in his [c] passion, or enduring all sorts of miseries, even death itself.—[a] Luke i. 35; John i. 14; Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4; Heb. ii. 9, 14.—[b] Matt. iii. 15, v. 17; Luke ii. 21; John viii. 46; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 John iii. 5.—[c] Isa. liii. 4–6; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Q. 3. *Wherein consists his exaltation?*

A. In, first, his resurrection; secondly, ascension; thirdly, sitting at the right hand of God;—by all which he was declared to be the Son of God with power.—Matt. xxviii. 18; Rom. i. 4, vi. 4; Eph. iv. 9; Phil. ii. 9, 10; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

CHAP. XV.—Of the Persons to whom the Benefits of Christ's Offices do belong.

Q. 1. *Unto whom do the saving benefits of what Christ performeth, in the execution of his offices, belong?*

A. Only to his elect.[1] [2] [3]—John xvii. 9; Isa. lxiii. 9; Heb. iii. 6, x. 21.

Q. 2. *Died he for no other?*

A. None, in respect of his Father's eternal purpose, and his own intention of removing wrath from them, and procuring grace and glory for them.—Acts xx. 28; Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 28; John xi. 51, 52; Isa. liii. 12; John iii. 16, x. 11–13, 15; Eph. v. 25; Rom. viii. 32, 34; Gal. iii. 13; John vi. 37, 39; Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

Q. 3. *What shall become of them for whom Christ died not?*

A. Everlasting torments for their sins; their portion in their own place.—Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; Matt. xxv. 41; Acts i. 25.

Q. 4. *For whom doth he make intercession?*

A. Only for those who from eternity were given him by his Father. —John xvii.; Heb. vii. 24, 25.

CHAP. XVI.—Of the Church.

Q. 1. *How are the elect called, in respect of their obedience unto Christ, and union with him?*

A. His church.—Acts xx. 28; Eph. v. 32.

[1] Christ giveth life to all that world for whom he gave his life.

[2] None that he died for shall ever die.

[3] To say that Christ died for every man universally, is to affirm that he did no more for the elect than the reprobates,—for them that are saved than for them that are damned; which is the Arminian blasphemy.

Q. 2. *What is the church of Christ?*

A. The whole company of God's[1 2 3 4 5] elect, [a] called [b] of God, [c] by the Word and Spirit, [d] out of their natural condition, to the dignity of his children, and [e] united unto Christ their head, by faith, in the bond of the Spirit.—[a] Acts ii. 47; 1 Tim. v. 21; Heb. xii. 22–24.—[b] Rom. i. 5, 6, ix. 11, 24; 1 Cor. iv. 15; 2 Tim. i. 9.—[c] Acts xvi. 14; John iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 15; 1 Pet. i. 23; Heb. viii. 10.—[d] Eph. ii. 11–13; Col. i. 13; Heb. ii. 14, 15; 1 Pet. ii. 9.—[e] John xvii. 21; Eph. ii. 18–22.

Q. 3. *Is this whole church always in the same state?*

A. No; one part of it is militant, the other triumphant.

Q. 4. *What is the church militant?*

A. That portion of God's elect which, in their generation, cleaveth unto Christ by faith, and fighteth against the world, flesh, and devil. —Eph. vi. 11, 12; Heb. xi. 13, 14, xii. 1, 4.

Q. 5. *What is the church triumphant?*

A. That portion of God's people who, having fought their fight and kept the faith, are now in heaven, resting from their labours.—Eph. v. 27; Rev. iii. 21, xiv. 13.

Q. 6. *Are not the church of the Jews before the birth of Christ, and the church of the Christians since, two churches?*

A. No; essentially they are but one,[6] differing only in some outward administrations.—Eph. ii. 11–16; 1 Cor. x. 3; Gal. iv. 26, 27; Heb. xi. 16, 26, 40.

Q. 7. *Can this church be wholly overthrown on the earth?*

A. No; unless the decree of God may be changed, and the promise of Christ fail.—Matt. xvi. 18, xxviii. 20; John xiv. 16, xvii.; 1 Tim. iii. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

CHAP. XVII.—Of Faith.

Q. 1. *By what means do we become actual members of this church of God?*

A. By a lively justifying faith,[7] whereby we are united unto Christ,

[1] The elect angels belong to this church.

[2] No distance of time or place breaks the unity of this church: heaven and earth, from the beginning of the world unto the end, are comprised in it.

[3] No mention in Scripture of any church in purgatory.

[4] This is the catholic church;—though that term be not to be found in the Word in this sense, the thing itself is obvious.

[5] The pope, challenging unto himself the title of the head of the catholic church, is blasphemously rebellious against Jesus Christ.

[6] This is that ark out of which whosoever is shall surely perish.

[7] Of this faith the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause, the Word, the instrumental;—the Law indirectly, by discovering our misery; the Gospel immediately, by holding forth a Saviour.

the head thereof.—Acts ii. 47, xiii. 48; Heb. xi. 6, xii. 22, 23, iv. 2; Rom. v. 1, 2; Eph. ii. 13, 14.

Q. 2. *What is a justifying faith?*

A. A [a] gracious resting upon[1] the free promises of God in Jesus Christ for mercy, [b] with a firm persuasion of heart that God is a reconciled Father unto us in the Son of his love.—[a] 1 Tim. i. 16; Job xiii. 15, xix. 25; Rom. iv. 5.—[b] Heb. iv. 16; Rom. viii. 38, 39; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

Q. 3. *Have all this faith?*

A. None but the elect of God.—Tit. i. 1; John x. 26; Matt. xiii. 11; Acts xiii. 48; Rom. viii. 30.

Q. 4. *Do not, then, others believe that make profession?*

A. Yes; with, first, historical faith, or a persuasion that the things written in the Word are true, James ii. 19; secondly, temporary faith, which hath some joy of the affections, upon unspiritual grounds, in the things believed.—Matt. xiii. 20; Mark vi. 20; John ii. 23, 24; Acts viii. 13.

CHAP. XVIII.—Of our Vocation, or God's Calling us.

Q. 1. *How come we to have this saving faith?*

A. It is freely bestowed upon us and wrought in us by the Spirit of God, in our vocation or calling.—John vi. 29, 44; Eph. ii. 8, 9; Phil. i. 29; 2 Thess. i. 11.

Q. 2. *What is our vocation, or this calling of God?*

A. The free, gracious[2] [3] act of Almighty God, whereby in Jesus Christ he calleth and translateth us from the state of nature, sin, wrath, and corruption, into the state of grace and union with Christ, by the mighty, effectual working of his Spirit in the preaching of the Word.—Col. i. 12, 13; 2 Tim. i. 9; Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Matt. xi. 25, 26; John i. 13, iii. 3, 8; Eph. i. 19; Col. ii. 12; 1 Cor. iv. 7; James i. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 20; Acts xvi. 14.

Q. 3. *What do we ourselves perform in this change, or work of our conversion?*

A. Nothing at all, being merely[4] wrought upon by the free grace and Spirit of God, when in ourselves we have no ability to any thing that is spiritually good.—Matt. vii. 18, x. 20; John i. 13,

[1] Faith is in the understanding, in respect of its being and subsistence,—in the will and heart, in respect of its effectual working.

[2] Our effectual calling is the first effect of our everlasting election.

[3] We have no actual interest in nor right unto Christ, until we are thus called.

[4] They who so boast of the strength of free-will in the work of our conversion, are themselves an example what it is being given up to so vile an error,—destitute of the grace of God.

xv. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 3, ii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 1, 8; Rom. viii. 26; Phil. i. 6.

Q. 4. *Doth God thus call all and every one?*

A. All within the pale of the church are outwardly called by the Word, none effectually but the elect.—Matt. xxii. 14; Rom. viii. 30.

CHAP. XIX.—Of Justification.

Q. 1. *Are we accounted righteous and saved for our faith, when we are thus freely called?*

A. No, but merely by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith; for which alone the Lord accepts us as holy and righteous.—Isa. xliii. 25; Rom. iii. 23–26, iv. 5.

Q. 2. *What, then, is our justification or righteousness before God?*

A. The gracious, free act[1] of God, imputing the righteousness of Christ to a believing sinner, and for that speaking peace unto his conscience, in the pardon of his sin,—pronouncing him to be just and accepted before him.—Gen. xv. 6; Acts xiii. 38, 39; Luke xviii. 14; Rom. iii. 24, 26, 28, iv. 4–8; Gal. ii. 16.

Q. 3. *Are we not, then, righteous before God by our own works?*

A. No; for of themselves they can neither satisfy his justice, fulfil his law, nor endure his trial.—Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, cxliii. 2; Isa. lxiv. 6; Luke xvii. 10.

CHAP. XX.—Of Sanctification.

Q. 1. *Is there nothing, then, required of us but faith only?*

A. Yes; [a]repentance, and [b]holiness or new obedience.—[a]Acts xx. 21; Matt. iii. 2; Luke xiii. 3.—[b]2 Tim. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 7; Heb. xii. 14.

Q. 2. *What is repentance?*

A. Godly [a]sorrow for every known[2 3] sin committed against God,

[1] Legal and evangelical justification differ; first, on the part of the persons to be justified,—the one requiring a person legally and perfectly righteous,—the other a believing sinner; secondly, on the part of God, who in the one is a severe, righteous judge,—in the other, a merciful, reconciled Father; thirdly, in the sentence, which in the one acquitteth, as having done nothing amiss,—in the other, as having all amiss pardoned.

[2] Repentance includeth, first, alteration of the mind into a hatred of sin, before loved; secondly, sorrow of the affections for sin committed; thirdly, change of the actions arising from both.

[3] Repentance is either legal, servile, and terrifying, from the spirit of bondage; or evangelical, filial, and comforting, from the spirit of free grace and liberty, which only is available.

[b] with a firm purpose of heart to cleave unto him for the future, [c] in the killing of sin, the quickening of all graces, to walk before him in newness of life.—[a] 2 Cor. vii. 9–11; Acts ii. 37; Ps. li. 17.—[b] Ps. xxxiv. 14; Isa. i. 16, 17; Ezek. xviii. 27, 28; Acts xiv. 15.—[c] Eph. iv. 21–24; Rom. vi. 12, 13, 18, 19, viii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

Q. 3. *Can we do this of ourselves?*

A. No; it is a special gift and grace of God, which he bestoweth on whom he pleaseth.—Lev. xx. 8; Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xi. 19, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 25; Acts xi. 18.

Q. 4. *Wherein doth the being of true repentance consist, without which it is not acceptable?*

A. In its[1] performance according to the Gospel rule, with faith and assured hope of divine mercy.—Ps. li.; 1 John ii. 1, 2; 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11; Acts ii. 38; Matt. xxvi. 75.

Q. 5. *What is that holiness which is required of us?*

A. That [a] universal,[2] [3] sincere obedience to the whole will of God, [b] in our hearts, minds, wills, and actions, [c] whereby we are in some measure made conformable to Christ, our head.—[a] Ps. cxix. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 22; John xiv. 15; Rom. vi. 19; Heb. xii. 14; Tit. ii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 5–7; Isa. i. 16, 17.—[b] 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37.—[c] Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 1; Eph. ii. 21; Col. iii. 1–3; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

Q. 6. *Is this holiness or obedience in us perfect?*

A. Yes, [a] in respect[4] of all the parts of it, but [b] not in respect of the degrees wherein God requires it.—[a] 2 Kings xx. 3; Job i. 1; Matt. v. 48; Luke i. 6; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. iv. 24; Tit. ii. 12.—[b] Isa. lxiv. 6; Ps. cxxx. 3; Exod. xxviii. 38; Phil. iii. 12.

Q. 7. *Will God accept of that obedience which falls so short of what he requireth?*

A. Yes, from them[5] whose persons he accepteth and justifieth freely in Jesus Christ.—Rom. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 16; 1 John iii. 22; Eph. i. 6.

Q. 8. *What are the parts of this holiness?*

A. [a] Internal, in the quickening of all graces, purging all sins; [b] and external, in fervent and frequent prayers, alms, and all manner of righteousness.—[a] Heb. ix. 14; Eph. iii. 16, 17; Rom. ii. 29, vi. 12. —[b] Matt. v. 20; Rom. viii. 1, 2; Eph. iv. 22, 23; Tit. ii. 12. Particular precepts are innumerable.

[1] Every part of Popish repentance—viz., contrition, confession, and satisfaction—was performed by Judas.

[2] All faith and profession, without this holiness, is vain and of no effect.

[3] True faith can no more be without true holiness than true fire without heat.

[4] Merit of works in unprofitable servants, no way able to do their duty, is a Popish miracle.

[5] In Christ are our persons accepted freely, and for him our obedience.

Q. 9. *May not others perform these duties acceptably, as well as those that believe?*

A. No;[1] all their performances in this kind are but abominable sins before the Lord.—Prov. xv. 8; John ix. 31; Tit. i. 15; Heb. xi. 6.

CHAP. XXI.—Of the Privileges of Believers.

Q. 1. *What are the privileges of those that thus believe and repent?*

A. First, union with Christ; secondly, adoption of children; thirdly, Christian liberty; fourthly, a spiritual, holy right to the seals of the new covenant; fifthly, communion with all saints; sixthly, resurrection of the body unto life eternal.

Q. 2. *What is our union with Christ?*

A. An [a]holy, spiritual[2 3] conjunction unto him, as our [b]head, [c]husband, and [d]foundation, [e]whereby we are made partakers of the same Spirit with him, [f]and derive all good things from him.—[a]1 Cor. xii. 12; John xv. 1, 2, 5–7, xvii. 23.—[b]Eph. iv. 15, v. 23; Col. i. 18.—[c]2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25–27; Rev. xxi. 9.—[d]Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. ii. 20–22; 1 Pet. ii. 4–7.—[e]Rom. viii. 9, 11; Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19.—[f]John i. 12, 16; Eph. i. 3.

Q. 3. *What is our adoption?*

A. Our gracious reception into the family of God, as his children, and co-heirs with Christ.—John i. 12; Rom. viii. 15, 17; Gal. iv. 5; Eph. i. 5.

Q. 4. *How come we to know this?*

A. By the especial working of the Holy[4] Spirit in our hearts, sealing unto us the promises of God, and raising up our souls to an assured expectation of the promised inheritance.—Rom. viii. 15, 17; Eph. iv. 30; 1 John iii. 1; Rom. viii. 19, 23; Tit. ii. 13.

Q. 5. *What is our Christian liberty?*

A. An[5] holy and spiritual [a]freedom from the [b]slavery of sin, the [c]bondage of death and hell, the [d]curse of the law, [e]Jewish ceremonies, and [f]thraldom of conscience, purchased for us by Jesus

[1] The best duties of unbelievers are but white sins.

[2] By virtue of this union, Christ suffereth in our afflictions; and we fill up in our bodies what remaineth as his.

[3] From Christ, as head of the church, we have spiritual life, sense, and motion, or growth in grace; secondly, as the husband of the church, love and redemption; thirdly, as the foundation thereof, stability and perseverance.

[4] This is that great honour and dignity of believers, which exalts them to a despising all earthly thrones.

[5] Our liberty is our inheritance here below, which we ought to contend for, against all opposers.

Christ, and [g] revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.—[a] Gal. v. 1.—[b] John viii. 32, 34, 36; Rom. vi. 17, 18; Isa. lxi. 1; 1 John i. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21. —[c] Rom. viii. 15; Heb. ii. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.—[d] Gal. iii. 13; Eph. ii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 5; Rom. viii. 1.—[e] Acts xv. 10, 11; Gal. iii., iv., v. [f] 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 16.—[g] 1 Cor. ii. 12.

Q. 6. *Are we, then, wholly freed from the moral law?*

A. Yes, as [a] a covenant,[1] or as it hath any thing in it bringing into bondage,—as the curse, power, dominion, and rigid exaction of obedience; [b] but not as it is a rule of life and holiness.—[a] Jer. xxxi. 31–33; Rom. vii. 1–3, vi. 14; Gal. iii. 19, 24; Rom. viii. 2; Gal. v. 18.—[b] Matt. v. 17; Rom. iii. 31, vii. 13, 22, 25.

Q. 7. *Are we not freed by Christ from the magistrate's power and human authority?*

A. No; being ordained of[2] God, and commanding for him, we owe them all lawful obedience.—Rom. xiii. 1–4; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; 1 Pet. ii. 13–15.

CHAP. XXII.—Of the Sacraments of the New Covenant in particular, —a holy right whereunto is the Fourth Privilege of Believers.

Q. 1. *What are the seals of the New Testament?*

A. Sacraments instituted of Christ to be visible seals and pledges, whereby God in him confirmeth the promises of the covenant to all believers, re-stipulating of them growth in faith and obedience.—Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 5; Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16; Rom. iv. 11; 1 Cor. x. 2–4, xi. 26–29.

Q. 2. *How doth God by these sacraments bestow grace upon us?*

A. Not by any[3] real essential conveying of spiritual grace by corporeal means, but by the way of promise, obsignation, and covenant, confirming the grace wrought in us by the Word and Spirit.—Heb. iv. 2; 1 Cor. x.; Rom. iv. 11, i. 17; Mark xvi. 16; Eph. v. 26.

Q. 3. *How do our sacraments differ from the sacraments of the Jews?*

A. Accidentally only, in things concerning the outward matter and form, as their number, quality, clearness of signification, and the like,—not essentially, in the things signified, or grace confirmed.—1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, &c.; John vi. 35; 1 Cor. v. 7; Phil. iii. 3; Col. ii. 11.

[1] Nothing makes men condemn the law as a rule, but hatred of that universal holiness which it doth require.

[2] Rule and authority are as necessary for human society as fire and water for our lives.

[3] This is one of the greatest mysteries of the Roman magic and juggling, that corporeal elements should have a power to forgive sins, and confer spiritual grace.

CHAP. XXIII.—Of Baptism.

Q. 1. *Which are these sacraments?*

A. Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 2. *What is baptism?*

A. An [a] holy action, appointed[1] [2] of Christ, whereby being sprinkled with water in the name of the whole Trinity, by a lawful minister of the church, [b] we are admitted into the family of God, [c] and have the benefits of the blood of Christ confirmed unto us.—[a] Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16.—[b] Acts ii. 41, viii. 37.—[c] Acts ii. 38, 39; John iii. 5; Rom. vi. 3–5; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Q. 3. *To whom doth this sacrament belong?*

A. Unto all to whom the promise of the covenant is made; that is, to believers, and to their seed.—Acts ii. 39; Gen. xvii. 11, 12; Acts xvi. 15; Rom. iv. 10, 11; 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Q. 4. *How can baptism seal the pardon of all sins to us, all our personal sins following it?*

A. Inasmuch as it is a seal of that promise which gives pardon of all to believers.—Acts ii. 39; Rom. iv. 11, 12.

CHAP. XXIV.—Of the Lord's Supper.

Q. 1. *What is the Lord's supper?*

A. An [a] holy action instituted and[3] appointed by Christ, [b] to set forth his death, [c] and communicate unto us spiritually his body and blood by faith, being [d] represented by bread and wine, [e] blessed by his word, and prayer, [f] broken,[4] poured out, and received of believers. —[a] Matt. xxvi. 26–28; Luke xxii. 14–20; 1 Cor. xi. 23–25.—[b] Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.—[c] Mark xiv. 22–24; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; John vi. 63.—[d] 1 Cor. xi. 23, 25.—[e] 1 Cor. xi. 24; Matt. xxvi. 26.—[f] Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19.

Q. 2. *When did Christ appoint this sacrament?*

A. On the night wherein he was betrayed to suffer.—1 Cor. xi. 23.

Q. 3. *Whence is the right use of it to be learned?*

[1] Not the want, but the contempt of this sacrament, is damnable.

[2] It is hard to say whether the error of the Papists, requiring baptism of absolute, indispensable necessity to the salvation of every infant, or that of the Anabaptists, debarring them from it altogether, be the most uncharitable.

[3] Baptism is the sacrament of our new birth, this of our farther growth in Christ.

[4] No part of Christian religion was ever so vilely contaminated and abused by profane wretches, as this pure, holy, plain action and institution of our Saviour: witness the Popish horrid monster of transubstantiation, and their idolatrous mass.

A. From the word,[1] practice, and actions of our Saviour, at its institution.

Q. 4. *What were the actions of our Saviour to be imitated by us?*

A. First, blessing the elements by prayer; secondly, breaking the bread, and pouring out the wine; thirdly, distributing them to the receivers, sitting in a table-gesture.—Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

Q. 5. *What were the words of Christ?*

A. First, of command,—"Take, eat;" secondly, of promise,—"This is my body;" thirdly, of institution for perpetual use,—"This do," &c. —1 Cor. xi. 24–26.

Q. 6. *Who are to be*[2] [3] *receivers of this sacrament?*

A. Those only have a true right to the signs who by faith have an holy interest in Christ, the thing signified.—1 Cor. xi. 27–29; John vi. 63.

Q. 7. *Do the elements remain bread and wine still, after the blessing of them?*

A. Yes; all the spiritual change is wrought by the faith of the receiver, not the words of the giver: to them that believe, they are the body and blood of Christ.—John vi. 63; 1 Cor. x. 4, xi. 29.

CHAP. XXV.—Of the Communion of Saints,—the Fifth Privilege of Believers.

Q. 1. *What is the communion of saints?*

A. An holy conjunction[4] between all God's people, wrought by their participation of the same Spirit, whereby we are all made members of that one body whereof Christ is the head.—Cant. vi. 9; Jer. xxxii. 39; John xvii. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 12; Eph. iv. 3–6, 13; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7.

Q. 2. *Of what sort is this union?*

A. First, [a] spiritual and internal, in the enjoyment of the same spirit and graces,—which is the union of the church catholic; secondly, [b] external and ecclesiastical, in the same outward ordinances,—which is the union of particular congregations.—[a] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph.

[1] Whatever is more than these, is of our own.

[2] Faith in God's promises, which it doth confirm,—union with Christ, whereof it is a seal,—and obedience to the right use of the ordinance itself,—are required of all receivers.

[3] There is not any one action pertaining to the spiritual nature of this sacrament, not any end put upon it by Christ,—as, first, the partaking of his body and blood; secondly, setting forth his death for us; thirdly, declaring of our union with him and his,—but requires faith, grace, and holiness, in the receivers.

[4] By virtue of this, we partake in all the good and evil of the people of God throughout the world.

ii. 16, 19–22; 1 Cor. x. 17; John xvii. 11, 21, 22; John x. 16; Heb. ii. 11.—[b] 1 Cor. i. 10, 11; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28; Eph. iv. 11–13; Phil. ii. 2; Col. iii. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 8.

CHAP. XXVI.—Of Particular Churches.

Q. 1. *What are particular churches?*

A. Peculiar [a] assemblies[1] [2] of professors in one place, [b] under officers of Christ's institution, [c] enjoying the ordinances of God, [d] and leading lives beseeming their holy calling.—[a] Acts xi. 26; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xi. 22; 2 Cor. i. 1.—[b] Acts xx. 17, 28, xiv. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 23; Heb. xiii. 17.—[c] 1 Cor. iii. 5; Rev. ii. 1–3.—[d] 2 Thess. iii. 5, 6, 11; Gal. vi. 16; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. ii. 12.

Q. 2. *What are the ordinary officers of such churches?*

A. First, [a] pastors or doctors,[3] to teach and exhort; secondly, [b] elders, to assist in rule and government; thirdly, [c] deacons, to provide for the poor.—[a] Rom. xii. 7, 8; Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28.—[b] Rom. xii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 17.—[c] Acts vi. 2, 3.

Q. 3. *What is required of these officers, especially the chiefest, or ministers?*

A. [a] That they be faithful in the ministry committed unto them; [b] sedulous in dispensing the Word; [c] watching for the good of the souls committed to them; [d] going before them in an example of all godliness and holiness of life.—[a] 1 Cor. iv. 2; Acts xx. 18–20.—[b] 2 Tim. ii. 15, iv. 1–5.—[c] Tit. i. 13; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.—[d] Tit. ii. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Matt. v. 16; Acts xxiv. 16.

Q. 4. *What is required in the people unto them?*

A. Obedience [a] to their message and ministry; [b] honour and love to their persons; [c] maintenance to them and their families.—[a] 2 Cor. v. 20; Rom. vi. 17; Heb. xiii. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 14; Rom. xvi. 19; 2 Cor. x. 4–6.—[b] 1 Cor. iv. 1; Gal. iv. 14; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.—[c] Luke x. 7; James v. 4; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18; 1 Cor. ix. 9–13.

CHAP. XXVII.—Of the Last Privilege of Believers,—being the Door of Entrance into Glory.

Q. 1. *What is the resurrection of the flesh?*

A. An act of the [4] mighty power of God's Holy Spirit, applying

[1] Every corruption doth not presently unchurch a people.

[2] Unholiness of fellow-worshippers defileth not God's ordinances.

[3] Ministers are the bishops of the Lord; lord-bishops came from Rome.

[4] The resurrection of the flesh hereafter is a powerful motive to live after the Spirit here.

unto us the virtue of Christ's resurrection, whereby, at the last day he will raise our whole bodies from the dust, to be united again unto our souls in everlasting happiness.—Job xix. 25–27; Ps. xvi. 9–11; Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 2, 3; Dan. xii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 16, &c.; Rev. xx. 12, 13.

Q. 2. *What is the end of this whole dispensation?*

A. The glory of God in our eternal salvation.

To Him be all glory and honour for evermore! Amen.

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JOHN DOWNAME.

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